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THE GROUND AND SUBSTANCE OF JUSTIFICATION :

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DISCOURSE,

TO THE

STUDENTS OF DARTMOUTH COLLEGE,

NOV. 1853.

BY NATHAN LORD,
PRESIDENT.

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DISCOURSE.

JOB IX. 2.—*How should man be just with God ?*

THIS is the inquiry of all minds ; the problem of all the ages. It has produced a conflict of the ages, accordingly as men, instead of accepting, with simplicity, have sensualized, or spiritualized, or denied the word of God.

The inquiry is pertinent to every particular man ; for every particular man is included under the general denominator of the text. Every particular man is likely to make the inquiry, and, sometimes, with profound anxiety ; for it involves his salvation.

It is pertinent to men collectively ; to every society, state, nation, the world. It concerns the conservation of men, socially and politically, as well as morally ; for justification, a state of righteousness before God, is universally prerequisite to a true and permanent prosperity. Without righteousness every thing eventually crumbles. All institutions which men represent and administer are made dependent on virtue. All subordinate material natures are so subordinated by God, as to be affected by the character of men. The earth itself, by God's original appointment, is blessed or cursed for man's sake. Wherefore, the problem of justification has a reach and comprehension as wide as our present terrestrial system. And, as our terrestrial system is doubtless related to all other parts of God's universal system, the problem has an universal interest, extending, at least as to moral im-

pression, to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, and to the lowest depths of hell. It involves the integrity and dignity of God's universal government, in the view of intelligent beings. Nothing could be more shortsighted than to imagine that this question of justification is merely appropriate to a few bad men, in respect to specific, overt offences ; or that it is limited to a nation, as the Jewish, or any other nation ; or that it has a merely local and temporary concernment accidental to any peculiar conditions of individuals or of society. For it is moral and essential. Its scope is infinite ; and its consequences are everlasting.

I propose to discuss this problem. I do it under a deep sense of its importance, especially to students and all other persons who are likely to lead and mould the opinions of society. For, if I mistake not, society, — and I mean our Protestant society, — is now, to a great extent, and in a remarkable manner, in consequence of new and subtle methods of philosophy, making up new issues between itself and God, in respect to righteousness. It is changing the evangelical meaning of the term, in accommodation to the new, confused and variable meanings which it puts upon the thing signified by it. A great temptation is spread before us, and with great, though, too generally, unperceived effect, to accept, under this name, ideas foreign to those which are intended in the Gospel, or were intended in the primitive churches, and in the early Protestant formulas ;— ideas which deeply affect the moral character and relations of men, and are likely to result in proportionately injurious consequences to the world. I would endeavor to propound the meaning which the Scripture, our only true guide, attaches to this term ; and to solve, out of Scripture, the problem which humanity, or, rather, its philosophical

representatives, are uncertainly and vainly trying to solve on their own account.

I say out of the Scripture ; — for the opinions of any man, or party, or school, are of no consequence but only as they are in accordance with the Revelations. We want not, on such a subject, theory, upon human reasoning, but fact, on Divine authority. For man's opinions, which are notional, variable, inconstant, cannot alter principles and laws which are immutable and eternal. Learned and good men often unconsciously or inconsiderately traverse, for their powers are limited, and their virtue is imperfect. Learned and bad men traverse voluntarily and with bad design. The Bible never traverses. Justification is above opinion, hypothesis, speculation, in the Divine wisdom. It is a problem of the supernatural, the infinite. It belongs only to God. Whether God will justify a sinner, or how, or on what conditions ; and whether he will, at any time, or when, or how, bring into a state of justification the whole fallen world, and introduce a millenium ; or what the millenium will be, is as much beyond the grasp of Gabriel as of an infant. Our mere notions about it are contemptible. We are shut up to the Revelations. The question is suggested in the text, not for us to answer it, but to show us most emphatically, according to an idiom of Scripture, that we cannot answer it, because self-justification is impossible ; and to awaken our more profound concern about it ; and to direct us to the answer which God alone gives us out of heaven.

The term justification signifies, simply, the making or constituting of a man righteous ; but, by necessary implication, the making of an unjust man righteous. The *doctrine* of justification, which is my theme, concerns that way or method of clearing men from imputed guilt, and

constituting sinners righteous and acceptable to God, as their moral governor, which is revealed in the Bible. It presupposes the fall of man from original righteousness, his consequent universally and entirely sinful character, and his equally universal state of guilt and condemnation. It could have no significance whatever but upon the previously revealed fact of human degenerateness and wickedness. Its degree of significance to any mind will, of course, depend upon the degree to which that mind is previously convinced of its personal sinfulness, and the general apostasy and guilt of the world. No man can believe in justification who does not believe in the Scripture doctrine of sin; and whatever any man believes about sin will be the measure of his belief in justification. The two subjects are correlative, and necessarily qualify each other. If we accept the one only nominally and partially, we can have only a nominal and partial belief in the other, which nominal and partial belief may become, practically, and is likely to become, according to the natural law of error, one of the most injurious forms of unbelief, and to result in the greatest dishonor to Christ,—as the history of unbelief has shown. Luther went for the doctrine of justification, really and entirely; the reformers, in general, and the pilgrim fathers of New England went for it, in the same measure and degree, as “*articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*,” because they went for the previous doctrines of original and actual sin. They would not have taken a pen to write for it, and much less would they have given their bodies to burn for it, if they had not regarded it as an account of God’s established method of taking away sin. They believed, according to the literal Scripture, that all men are by nature children of wrath, that the principle of evil is born with them, pertaining, mysteriously, to every man’s moral be-

ing; and hereditarily, by reason of parentage, as really as the principle of reason to the mind, or of sensibility to the nerves; and constituting a sinful character, in its order, as truly as those constitute intellectual or animal character, in their respective orders; the one quite as level to human comprehension as the others; that is, all equally above it. They believed that by Adam's disobedience all were made sinners, and consequently in Adam all die under the penalty of law; and they did not feel themselves called upon to vindicate the character of God in establishing such a constitution; or to qualify or refine away the express and unequivocal declarations of his word, in accommodation to the prurient intellects, or uneasy sensibilities of a hostile world. This was their stand-point; and from it they looked away to Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from heaven,—to his obedience unto death, and his resurrection unto life, in and by whom alone God sees fit to clear, and magnify, and exalt himself both to the good and bad of all the worlds,—as he does now, in measure, and will effectually do in the issue of this wonderful manifestation. They put the one over against the other, —unrighteousness by the first man, righteousness by the second; death by Adam, resurrection by Christ. These remarkable antitheses constituted, in their minds, the central truths of Christianity, primitive and reformed, without which Christianity must run down, on the one hand, into the crude naturalism of popery, as it had done in their time, or evaporate, on the other, in the more subtle and destructive naturalism of neology, as it has been doing ever since. We ask for the primitive and reformed faith, for the doctrine of the Bible and the catechism, and not for the theories of the sophists; —the sensuous sophists of the middle ages, who, by a necessity of their class, held to one false idea; or the more imagina-

tive and etherial sophists of the modern age, who, by an equal necessity, are as variable as the winds. We trust there will still be Christian students, and ministers, and people, who will continue to ask, and to hold fast to the words of Scripture, equally captivated not at all by the old lights of popery, which were once new, and the new lights more brilliant and flashy of a more speculative, and romantic, and less reverential period. For the true Christ is ever and only in the Scripture, — a supernatural Christ, — and to be truly seen there only, not with the eye of sense, or the eye of reason, but of faith, — “The gift of God.”

I will now discourse of *the ground, and the substance* of justification.

I. The ground of justification is Christ's work of redemption, by his sacrificial death.

The Scripture saith, ‘We are redeemed unto God by his blood :’ — ‘Christ has suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us unto God, being put to death :’ — ‘Who bare our sins in his own body on the tree :’ — ‘Redeemed by the precious blood of Christ :’ — ‘Ye are bought with a price :’ — ‘The redemption of the purchased possession.’ These and scores of similar passages teach us literal redemption only, in distinction from all other ideas, — the language being interpreted to mean what similar language means in all other cases, which it must mean, agreeably to the natural laws of language, or it does not mean anything certainly, and we need a new Revelation in order to ascertain the meaning of the old ; though a new Revelation, or any number of Revelations would be equally uncertain, if they might, in like manner, be subject to the fancy or caprice of theorizing and interested interpreters. We are compelled by respect to

true knowledge in general, which would otherwise be impossible, to reject all such speculative interpretations, and, equally, all speculative methods and systems that produce them, or are built upon them. We want not any human theory of atonement, but Divine facts.

The facts declared in Scripture are— that God made man, the generic representative Adam, upright, in his own image, and the woman Eve, in the same likeness ; that these constituted heads of the race, through instigation of the Devil, fell, and lost the Divine life, by sin ; that in their fall the race is mysteriously implicated, and, consequently, sin and death, naturally, that is, according to the law of fallen and disordered natures, reign over this world. All individuals, families, states and nations are declared to be apostate and wicked. The curse of sin rests, naturally, that is, according to the settled and immutable principles of moral government, upon them all, and upon all subordinate animate and inanimate natures, so that “ The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together.” To repair this loss of good, consistently with those eternal principles by which God governs all the worlds, and by which only a personal and perfect God could be supposed to govern, Jesus Christ, in the fulness of time, was manifested from heaven. He was born, miraculously, of the virgin Mary, of the seed of David, according to lineage, but also declared to be the Son of God, with power, by the resurrection from the dead. Because of this Divine paternity he inherited not the sinful nature of man, and was capacitated for the work of his heavenly mission. The attention of the world was directed to this remarkable personage, as claiming to be the incarnation and manifestation of the Godhead,— a Divine teacher, a fulfiller of prophecy, and a worker of miracles. All the forces of material nature were sub-

ject to him, and, equally, all the higher and lower intelligencies that, with them, constituted the creation of God. The powers of heaven, earth, and hell bowed before him, and performed his bidding. He was creator of the worlds, Lord of angels, conqueror of the Devil and his revolted hosts. This God-Man, wholly God and wholly man, two natures in one person, was taken, according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and by wicked hands was slain, voluntarily submitting to inconceivable indignities and sufferings, the just for the unjust, offering himself, though infinitely excellent, a propitiatory sacrifice for the guilty, — a ransom for our sins. These events were connected with a long antecedent promise of salvation, by sacrifice, to our fallen progenitors, to the patriarchs of subsequent history, to Abraham the representative father of the elect, and to the Jewish Church. They were also in correspondence with emblematical sacrificial institutions of the Jewish economy, and more obscure traditionary sacrificial observances of all the pagan nations from the beginning of the world. Redemption was the theme, the antitype, the object and end of them all. It was the fulfilment and winding up of them all. They had all their significance and power of impression from their completing and perfecting issue in the offering of the Cross which bought our pardon. They would have been unmeaning, absurd and frivolous, or cruel and revolting, but for the end which they prefigured. This gave them consequence, propriety and dignity, and made them, accordingly, impressive upon the nations. When Jesus died they were finished, for redemption was then effected; and all nature signalized the event. The sun withheld his shining, the earth was convulsed, rocks were shattered, the vail of the temple was rent, the Shekinah was revealed,

the graves were opened, and reanimated dead men walked about the streets of Jerusalem. It was a miraculous, solemn, authoritative declaration of Almighty God.

These facts are history, supernaturally authenticated, and having a natural evidence, internal and collateral, incapable of refutation. If the things thus related in Scripture are not facts, there are no facts ; the world is not a reality, but a phantasmagoria ; we are spectres ; and spectres are nothing. Nihilism reigns.

The design, significancy and end of this history is redemption. Its centre is the cross ; and all other subjects of the Revelations are merely incidental and auxiliary. All the direct and literal language which describes it declares redemption. The analogies which explain and enforce it signify redemption. The figures which illustrate it picture redemption. But redemption itself, equally according to etymology, analogy and figure, imports the deliverance of the criminal from penalty by literal satisfaction to the broken law. If any choose, on that account, to call it mercenary, let them take the responsibility of applying that epithet, invidiously, to a transaction which God exalts as the highest instance of the integrity of his government, and which, in a liberal and comprehensive view, admits only of that construction. But upon no scientific principles of interpretation can they deny that redemption, in the literal and actual sense above expressed, is the doctrine of the Bible. That is the only natural and proper meaning of the term, according to those laws of language by which only we obtain knowledge and assurance upon any other subject. It implies a subject buying, an object bought, and a price paid ; — the subject, Christ ; — the object, man ; — the price, blood. “ Ye are bought with a price.” “ Ye are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and

gold, but with the precious blood of Christ.” “Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” The price is paid to the sovereign ruler, in view of his violated law, otherwise enforcing the condemnation of the sinful soul, but now made honorable in its release; — to offended and dishonored moral government, which could not stand if the claims of justice were not fully satisfied, to the view of moral beings, but is now rendered more glorious by the demonstration of the Cross. The race owed obedience. It fell. The law demanded death. Christ paid the forfeiture; and their acceptance of his ransom, through abounding grace, absolves them from their guilt. The broken law cannot exact upon any who are found in Christ; for their liability to punishment is discharged; justice was satisfied on the Cross. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” “Christ, our passover, is sacrificed for us.” The destroying angel, seeing his precious blood upon the door-posts of God’s people, passes them by. Such are the simple statements of the Scripture concerning the mysterious* fact of our redemp-

* I make frequent use of the epithets *mystery* and *mysterious*, that I may impress students with the distinction, which it is unsafe in any degree to lose sight of, between natural and supernatural truths; and that they may more wisely criticise that rationalizing fashion of discourse now so common, which would reduce all things in heaven, and earth, and under the earth, to the measure of our natural conceptions and judgments. The Gospel, over and above its testimony to natural religion, is beyond nature. It was given to supply our absolute deficiency of natural knowledge, in respect to redemption and its related truths, and is incomprehensible in the exercise of our merely natural powers. It is revealed to *faith*; and is to be simply accepted as incomprehensible, and though incomprehensible, because it proceeds forth miraculously and authoritatively from God. To affect a knowledge of it as of those natural phenomena which God has left more open to the exercise of our faculties, is at the expense of faith. To accept it only as it can be levelled to our natural ideas; that is, the ideas possible

tion ; and we ask for any to show cause, not out of their metaphysics, but out of Scripture, why they should put upon these statements a speculative and fanciful interpretation, and turn this sublime reality, the hope of a ruined world, into an allegory, a symbol, or a myth.

to us in the use of our imperfect and disordered powers, resolving its difficult problems either by the sensuous, or speculative reason,—like the Catholic, on the one hand, or the neologist, on the other, — is a virtual renunciation of faith. And it seems to have been so put to us, in the wisdom of God, as a test of character, with the assurance that if we receive not the kingdom of God as little children, we shall in no wise enter therein.

It has been commonly received among wise and good men, that some things are settled ; that, especially in ethics and theology, there are *principia*, the foundations of all belief, the starting points of all inquiry, the limits and the rule of reasoning, and the guide of life ; that to these principles we must travel back from all our circuits, making them the ultimate test of knowledge and virtue. But that is made questionable by our modern sophists. The old foundations are breaking up. For example ; — the first and foremost of these principles is the personality and absolute perfection of the Godhead. But I mistake if there are now many persons, out of an old fashioned and continually narrowing circle, who would feel obliged to accept a proposition *merely* because God affirms it, or a fact because God ordains it, or a principle because he makes it his rule of conduct. Rather, the principle, the fact, the doctrine must have the previous sanction of the reason, — by which can be meant only the reason of every man who chooses to exercise his ingenuity upon the subject. God himself, the Alpha and Omega, must be subjected to that criticism ; and our ideas of right and wrong, of fitness and unfitness, of honor and dishonor, must be, virtually, the standards of judgment in respect to his word and government. Be it so, if the reason of every particular man, and every particular great man, is but the developement of a supposed *universal reason*, and Pantheism is the true theology. But these critics of the reason, who affect to sit in judgment on the Godhead, ought to be frank, manly and consistent. They should make an open profession of their pantheistic faith, and prove it by something better than mesmeric finesse, before they call upon the Christian world to go back of principles which it has been used to regard as ultimate and decisive, and to accept dogmas and hypotheses upon the credit of a merely pretending oracle. New revealers should avow their Divine authority, and should work new miracles to sustain it. Else very good men and ministers of the Gospel, imposed upon by this specious sophistry, or unconsciously misled by its influence upon their own aspiring imaginations, may become the worst subverters of the old foundations, and confound the ele-

In what the merits of Christ's obedience, sufferings and death consist, how they are adequate to the demands of law, how equivalent to the punishment of transgressors, or in what philosophical sense they become available; — these, and other speculative questions raised in the schools, concern us not. They belong to the supernatural government of God, which cannot be reduced by our philosophy, and is likely to be dishonored by our ambitious and vain attempts. It would be amusing, if, on such a subject, any thing but serious melancholy could be justified, to observe the inconsistent and nugatory strifes of the sophists in aspiring to this circumvention of the infinite, and their mad sporting above the clouds. They do but dash each other's theories in pieces, and are severally dashed themselves against the plain and unsophisticated language of the Scripture, which gives us no solution of what is beyond our faculties, and calls upon us only to believe the facts upon the authority of God. Because of this presumptuous spirit, our protestant schools, the world over, are now divided and at variance, to the general confusion and indifference of the bewildered people, and the dishonoring and withdrawing of the Holy Spirit. But the facts of the Bible are not less facts because they are mysterious, and mysterious facts are not less credible or important because they are incom-

ments of all knowledge. And another worse consequence will then ensue; for the infatuated people, upon the natural propagation of the illusion, will, ere long, be left without either a pole-star to guide them in the darkness, or an anchor to hold them in the storm. They will merely float upon the wild sea, driven about by the gusty winds of doctrine that already threaten to convulse entirely the social state of Christendom, and to hasten a general catastrophe of the nations. Is there nothing like this now? Shall men's eyes be holden that they will not see it? Shall the vaunt of "progress and improvement" cheat us to the end? Shall we, by a vain public opinion, sustain one another in such an error till it is too late to retrace our steps?

prehensible in the imperfections of a probationary state. They rather constitute the trial and discipline of such a state, for which, indeed, God appoints it, giving us precisely this opportunity of subduing that presumptuous spirit of intermeddling with forbidden knowledge which occasioned the original loss of virtue in the race, and the perpetuated sacrifice of primeval good. They are not less satisfying and saving to the humbled and believing soul when it stands in its probation, and receives the kingdom of God as a little child. If I would be cured of a mortal disease, it is of no consequence to me that I do not comprehend the art of the physician, or the nature of the remedies by which he saves me. I should die if I declined the remedies till those speculative questions were settled, which I could not settle without being myself a physician ; and not then ; for I reckon that our best physicians are but experimentalists after all ; and whoever pretends to be more than that, and to have resolved, by any eclectic process, the arcana of the profession, and to have found the Catholicon, is not a true physician, but an empiric and pretender. Let no man trust him. And so it is enough that Christ has satisfied the demands of justice, and that God is well pleased with the economy of redemption, which himself establishes and reveals. The intimate nature of this redemption we may be content to let alone ; for we are bound by the law of our finite and disordered faculties to let it alone, till we are raised to a higher sphere, lest we be turned away, by scholastic artifice, from the fact of redemption which alone concerns us, to metaphysical fictions which prove nothing, but confuse all things, and produce the greatest unconcern of what most touches our salvation. What have we to do to catch at shadows, and let go the substance, though men vainly call those shad-

ows learning and philosophy? What, but as Paul, to know it for what it is, to criticise it by a higher standard, and expose its egotism, shallowness and falsehood?

The fact of redemption by Christ's blood on which simple-hearted Christians have always rested, is so simple, that they who would be learned rather than wise, choose not to present it in its simplicity, lest they should not attain to the proper dignity of a learned calling. That vice belongs to scholasticism in general, which, in all the ages, has, wittingly or unwittingly, covered up God's simplicities by its vain affectations. But it is well for students, liable as they are to that temptation, to know that things are always most essential, vital and consequential in their simplicities, and are then corner-stones of the greatest buildings, and key-stones of the most magnificent arches; and that these simplicities, as well in natural as in supernatural science, are things which we learn not by reason, and cannot explain by reason, but take for granted by a simple faith. So it is that this simple fact of Christ having bought us by his blood, paying that infinite, though infinitely mysterious price for our redemption, which fact we know by faith alone, is the basis and compacting element of Christianity, without which Christianity falls, or becomes only an illuminated edition of natural religion; — yet not natural religion, in its simplicity, but as it is expounded by such as would improve upon the original traditions. Our justification before God stands upon it, which could not stand, as we shall see by and by, if a perfect satisfaction were not made to moral government for our sins. Admit the sin, and we must admit also the expiation, according to the Scripture, as the only adequate foundation for the sinner's hope. Expiation for sin could not, indeed, be reasoned out by us, *a priori*, notwithstanding

those sophists, who would be thought evangelical, but would have the Gospel true, not because God reveals it, but because it is indicated by their *a priori* reason. Yet, who ever reasoned out redemption independently of Revelation? Who ever heard of a crucified Christ except from the Bible? It is easy for any man, now that an atonement is made and declared, to say, ambitiously, that it was evident beforehand; and it is easy for some men to frame an ingenious argument upon that pretence. But who ever actually prophesied of redemption, except the men whom God miraculously inspired? Christ was no otherwise “The Desire of all nations,” than as the seed of the woman had been foretold in the holy Scriptures, and the scattered rays of that heavenly light had penetrated to the chambers of pagan imagery. The Persian Magi would not have found the actual Christ but for the miraculous star that led them. We have no evidence that unassisted reason could ever have gained that supernatural height; though, when the light of redemption shines into the otherwise benighted soul, its very expulsion of the previous darkness shows its fitness to the sinner’s forlorn and miserable condition. The experimental reason, then, expressly enlightened from above, admires what the mere speculative reason could never otherwise have imagined. It accredits truth, so inwrought by a Divine power, and the renewed heart gratefully entertains it, while to mere speculation it is still as romance and fable; — just so as always the poor, the ignorant, the suffering and despairing know, experimentally, the fitness and sufficiency of Christ’s salvation, when moved by the Holy Ghost, while the vainly wise ignore it, and it becomes to them a stumbling block and foolishness. The light of redemption shines into the open casements of their unsophisticated minds, as it never

could shine through the stained, variegated, parti-colored windows of the more fanciful and artistic, who like a painted and substituted rather than the living Christ, an idea, an image, rather than the reality. So “God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him”: — truly a severe but merited reproach upon the learned subtlety of this world !

There is great meaning in that interior, experimental evidence which convinces the believer, so profoundly, of the doctrines of the Gospel. It is so, particularly, in regard to the reality of our redemption by the blood of Christ ; for though this is declared to us in inspired language which has a logical power above all other language, yet all language fails, from its very nature, to produce that profound and vital sense of the fact which the believer entertains in his experienced soul. He doubts not the propositions which are embodied in the words of Scripture ; and they are full of light, and hope and peace to his otherwise darkened and despairing mind. They establish, strengthen and settle him ; but only as the body in which he finds the life of truth. When he reads, for instance, such unequivocal declarations as the following : — “ Whom God has set forth a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus ;” — “ Who hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood, and made us kings and priests unto God ;” — “ He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities ; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed ;” — these and similar declarations are assuring and satisfy-

ing in respect to fact. But the fact itself of his debt paid by Christ, his ransom effected by atoning blood, his exaltation out of Christ's humiliation, his joy out of Christ's sorrow, his glory out of Christ's shame, his life out of Christ's death, his ascent from Hades out of Christ's descent into it, his rising up from a state of ignominy and wrath to become an infinitely honorable habitation of God through the Spirit, while the eternal ages roll on the anthem of redeeming love ; — all this is connected, by a new consciousness, with thoughts, emotions and affections which are indescribable and unutterable. He could not tell them to another believing mind, and much less to one who had no similar experience. And he could not define them to himself. But he can tell to all men that, in view of the fact of redemption which he receives, literally, on the authority of God, he has corresponding exercises of the soul, produced by God's Spirit, which cannot be adequately told in any language of the earth ; and that those interior and vital evidences of the fact are even more conclusive to his mind than the historical or dogmatic evidence which he accepted on other grounds. He stands on this double foundation ; that is, the literal historical doctrine, and the corresponding heart-felt experience ; and, according to that great Christian paradox which no one but the Christian himself can understand or appreciate, he is the more convinced inasmuch as it is impossible for him to comprehend or explain the process. He believes, not with the stupid faith of the Catholic, because the fact is impossible, but with the recovered blind man of the Gospel, because it is impossible to describe the mysterious nature and incomprehensible influence of the certain fact, as that certain fact is made vital and effectual by the promised Spirit. He believes because of the sensible evidence of the

clay, the spittle, and the audible command ; but he believes, rather, because of the blessed light which is equally indescribable in its simplicity and its glory. Thus it is that the mysterious Cross and Regeneration go together in respect to God's elect. Thus it is, also, that the simple-hearted believer is kept in covenant, saved equally in respect to the letter and the spirit of the Scripture ; saved from the sophistry which substitutes dogma and form for the spiritual life ; from the sophistry that virtually rejects dogma and form, — the only appointed means of sustaining the spiritual life, and for the true Spirit substitutes a natural spiritualism, a false though baptized sentimentalism, which has no moral virtue ;—and that other more heartless sophistry which subjects both doctrine and experience, the letter and the Spirit, to a mere *idea*, a conception and image of the speculative reason that puffeth up with a conceit of wisdom and virtue, but leaves the soul barren and unprofitable.*

*I must ask of students that they would studiously enter into the meaning of these distinctions, and follow them out, critically, in their application to the systems of error that are coming in so destructively, but, to the generality even of good men, imperceptibly, in our times, and are wrestling, according to their respective varieties, the interpretation of Scripture. They will then understand the infinite difference between the Christ of the Bible, and the Christ of nature ; — the school that has one master, and the schools that have many. They will be able to lay open to their sources the fallacies of Romanism, Puseyism, Pelagianism, and the different types of neological philosophy. They will mark the natural influence of these several distinct subtleties in the opposing superstitions and fanaticisms of the age. They will learn the devices of the Prince of the power of the air, in arraying now these hostile forces, exciting them to a new and terrible activity, and, under color, on the one hand, of preserving, and, on the other, of reforming and improving society, heaping up the elements of general explosion and revolution. They will consequently attain to a knowledge, and, by the blessing of God upon such important studies, to a character eminently fitted for those hastening scenes of prophetic history, — scenes unexampled in the past ages, — in which all these erring parties will experience ruinous reverses, though now they regard the warnings of Scripture with stolid indifference, or an irritable unbelief.

We rest then our justification before God on the ground of this literal and experimental doctrine of Christ's redemption. We owe it wholly to the Scripture which proposes it to us as God's only and sovereign provision for our deliverance from the curse of sin. In the consciousness of guilt we accept it as the only known or conceivable method of absolution. We are shut up to it; and can only evade it by a denial or misconstruction of our lost and sinful state. But we know ourselves too well to make that denial, even if the Scripture had given us no account, beforehand, of the fall of Adam, and had not concluded us all under sin. We could, but God forbid that we should misinterpret the Scripture in respect to the apostasy and depravity of the race. We could, then, diminish our sense of personal unworthiness, and of the necessity and reality of Christ's atonement; we could abandon ourselves to a merely ideal theology, and reduce the doctrine of sin and redemption to philosophical formulas squared to our fictitious conceptions of the nature of God, of his end in creation and providence, of virtue, of government, of retribution; we could substitute these artificial standards for the teachings of Scripture and experience, and sustain ourselves by the vote of the majority. But when Sinai thunders its anathemas in our guilty conscience, and the awakened soul becomes alive to the ruined state of the world, and its own personal depravity and insufficiency, then all these cobwebs of speculation are swept away, and we learn that there is nothing to know or to make known as a ground of hope save Jesus Christ and him crucified. So the blood-bought Church, elect in the Redeemer, has always judged; and a crucified Christ has been all the glory and the joy of every penitent disciple. When the Church visible has lost the spirit of its invisible relations, and

has turned to fables, then Christ has withdrawn from it, and it has shed disastrous light upon the nations, equally disastrous whether it has been Roman or German, the false fire of the Vatican, or the Areopagus. Guilt and sacrifice stand or fall together. Deny the Scripture doctrine of original and actual sin, in that interior and vital sense in which Romanists deny it, and you set up a ritual justification, and substitute an outward washing for the cleansing of the soul. Deny it in the same sense as the neologist, after his order, denies it, and you set up a sentimental justification, and substitute girlish emotions and sympathies, mere refined humanities for the heavenly love. You become a creature of forms, on the one hand, or of sensibilities, on the other ; a sensualist or idealist in philosophy ; stoical or epicurean, ascetic or philanthropic in morals ; superstitious or fanatical in religion ; despotic or revolutionary in politics ; socially, a cold and leaden bigot in your attachment to antiquated errors and abuses, or a gaseous and steaming fomentor of reforms, discords and destructions ; on both hands, equally lost to yourself, to society, and to God ; for man finds God, and becomes like God, and acceptable to God only at the Cross : “ I am the way, and the truth, and the life ; no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”*

*It is worthy of the student's most attentive observation, that the Romanist and the neologist come out, though by different methods of reasoning and interpretation, in nearly similar conclusions concerning the doctrine of sin ; and that, consequently, they will be likely, in the course of providence, to come together also in respect to their social and political relations. Because their different respective methods are both equally natural and philosophical, and not of faith, they equally fail, of necessity, to apprehend that death of the soul, its loss of the Divine life of love, by the fall of Adam, which is set forth in Scripture. These differences, therefore, being not essential, but merely speculative and formal, oppose no serious obstacles to a practical and political agreement when exigencies require. The neologist, for example, now alleges upon the Romanist the absurd belief of a mere

II. The substance of justification.

Justification presupposes guilt. Whoever is justified was previously guilty, be he the old man of an hundred years, or the infant of an hour. And justification must have substance as really as guilt, or it cannot be substi-

physical depravity, in consequence of the fall of Adam, — a derived distemper in the supposed organism of the soul, to which baptismal regeneration, penance, almsgiving, priestly absolution, and the like, are in natural correspondence ; making him a mere ritualist in religion. The Romanist, on the other hand, charges upon his adversary the greater absurdity of supposing a pure spirit, a development of the supposed universal reason, or, more orthodoxly, a new creation of God, incarcerated in a distempered organism of flesh and blood, subject to disturbance and irregularity from the diseased sensibilities and deranged appetites of a mortal body, for all which a natural remedy is found in the arts of hygiene, and a vigorous cultivation of the active and moral powers ; that is, a refined education in general ; — making him a mere spiritualist, or sentimentalist in religion. Thus they stand only at opposite poles of the same natural system. And they do not virtually misrepresent each other ; for their respective theories, so far as any theory on such a subject can be reduced to formulas, centre in a merely physical idea of sin, and run out practically to a merely physical deliverance from it. According to them both, and equally, the loss produced to the soul by sin, being only accidental and not essential and vital, is a loss to be repaired, consequently, on the one part, by an outward washing, and, on the other part, by a galvanic stimulus. Both these remedies are equally natural, except as both parties, in affected compliment to the Scripture, admit an assisting influence of a Divine Spirit. But in both theories, as the stress is laid upon the physical evil, so, of necessity, it is laid also upon the physical remedy, and not the supernatural afflatus, which is but as a favoring breeze upon the steamer that can do without it, or against it ; for God himself, according to both philosophies cannot help saving the *absolved* or the *resolved* professor of their respective creeds. In both, the Redemption, and the Regeneration, and the Justification, as they are not formal, but vital and essential, not natural but supernatural, are but nominally and not really admitted, and the supernatural Gospel which reveals them is essentially dishonored. They would both save, not by the true Christ, but by semblances and fictions ; the one by consecrated water, the other, by rhetoric and philosophy ; the one by a visible ordinance, the other by animal magnetism ; the one by physical constraint, the other by moral suasion ; the one by the fear of misery, the other by the love of happiness ; the one by display of regal and pontifical magnificence, the other by an independent press and spirited discussion ; the one by bulls and anathemas ; the other by speeches and resolutions. And whosoever chooses not to be

tuted for it, and guilt cannot be taken away. The two ideas must be consubstantial; that is, not merely related ideas, but reduced to facts and verities. Being a substantial verity, it admits of definition. It has a mean-

 saved by either, but is indifferent alike to threat and flattery, is denounced by both for new-fangled heresy, or old-fashioned pertinacity; left to reach heaven at last, if at all, only according to uncovenanted mercy, or universal salvation.

Yet the Romanist has clearly this great advantage over the neologist, — that his method, more sensuous though it be, makes at least a more tangible recognition of the word of God. He honors, though out of all proportion, and extravagantly, the formal dogmas and the rites of Scripture, and, so far, holds to something that is, in an important sense, connected with salvation; whereas the other transcends the Scripture altogether, and passes into a region of mere abstractions. He relies on what the Scripture in no wise recommends, but, contrarily, denounces, and calls upon the Christians to beware of, lest they be spoiled through its vain deceits, — as the excellent Paul has it: — “For I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

Wherefore I doubt not that these two fallacies, opposites in form, but of the same essence, will come together, when a common occasion, in the course of providence, shall occur; and, particularly, that Romanism, having a more settled character, and positive efficiency, and withal a more plausible pretence of Divine authority, will swallow up neology. Neology, ideal and unsubstantial as it is, when its insufficiency to save men from the death of sin, and its corresponding powerlessness, as an instrument of state, to save them from social and political disorganization, shall become practically evident throughout the Christian world, as it already is in the most learned and civilized parts of it, will retire from the conflict. It will be obliged, at least, to affect Romanism, to conceal itself under its name, and to fight under its banners, making that false system more adulterous and anti-christian; for the mere security of its temporalities. It will, by and by, manifest less concern for its own visionary and useless speculations than for life and property. It will learn that an imaginative theology and corresponding empty declamation are no match for Satanic agency; and that without some formal show of Divine authority, some sensible hold on the natural conscience, this fallen and God-hating world will naturally fall off into anarchy and dissolution. It will find that when it has abolished institutions, civil or religious, benevolent or penal, ordained in the wisdom of God; or when it has reformed and shaped them, only according to its vain ideas,

ing like any other reality of Scripture, or of nature, and that meaning, sufficiently for all practical purposes, is distinctive and intelligible. We may ascertain in what justification consists.

It, of course, excludes the idea of any antecedent righteousness ; for it consists in making unjust persons

and equally in rejection of their Divine right, then it has taken itself out of the Divine protection, and that the setting up of its romantic idolatry is but a signal for the execution of God's judicial vengeance.

Already the winding up of the whole scene of cosmopolitan reform. philanthropy and chicane, is at hand. The day hastens when the revolutionism growing out of the contest of the rival forces of Romanism and neology for the social and political dominion of the earth, and producing the present convulsions of our apostatizing Christendom, will cause a general reaction in favor of the strongest arm. The *new light* dream of universal liberty and equality, and universal salvation, will vanish like the painted clouds of evening, and the subjects of that grand modern hallucination will call upon some advancing dark power of despotism to save them from the ruinous political consequences of their delusion. Then experience will teach men, but too late, what they would not learn by faith from doctrinal and prophetic Scripture, how inefficient is any Gospel which is not Christ's, but another's, to establish liberty, and vindicate the boasted "rights of man;" — when "the abomination of desolation" shall stand again "in the holy place"; when another assimilated Greek and Roman power, more wickedly idolatrous than that of old, shall seek once more to possess the City and the Land which God forever holds in keeping for the people of his covenant. Nor can a more ultimate consequence be doubtful, according to that everlasting covenant, that this mighty despotism, more arrogant and insulting by reason of its world-wide triumphs, shall make the last resistance of this *aion* to the Prince of heaven ; and He, the true and literal Christ, shall consume the man of sin, — "That Wicked," — by the breath of his mouth, and destroy him by the brightness of his coming ; shall finish his six days' work, not of creation, but redemption, and usher in a Millennial Sabbath. For that let the afflicted militant Church of God wait, with patience and hope ; and "Fight the good fight of faith ; and keep the commandment, without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the "King of kings and Lord of lords"

While I say these things of Romanism and neology, I intend systems, — if neology may be said to have a system, — and not men ; or, rather, not all the men denominated by them. I remember the few great and good, exceptions to their respective schools, and much more the many humble poor,

righteous. It implies a character superinduced upon those who previously possessed it not, and were under condemnation for the want of it. Besides, a justifying righteousness is not a righteousness of works, but of faith.

But it consists not in faith. Faith is not righteousness ; for righteousness is by faith. It is a consequent of faith ; and to confound antecedent and consequent is a solecism. Righteousness is true virtue, holiness, and

unconsciously misled, who have fallen, unhappily, but not fatally, into these communions, yet have loved the true Christ behind the idols which a purblind reason had interposed, and worn his robe of righteousness, though ignorant, on the same account, that it was not a texture of their own. There are many grades of Romanism and neology, from high to low, and some possibly of God's elect in all, who, despite the accidents of birth and discipline, have lived so near the dividing line of faith, to the true Christ, that the heavenly influence has passed over, and saved them from the sinfulness, if not all the darkness and prejudice of the natural mind. God also, in his inscrutable wisdom, may use such servants of his whom he leaves still in partial bondage, not only to restrain bad men from excess of wickedness, but to reprove good men, of a purer doctrine, though less sanctified in heart, that no man should glory but in his grace. Wherefore, God forbid that any should not love and honor such chosen servants, for Christ's sake, though called to condemn and denounce the false systems in which they are brought up, even though these systems become more destructive from the sanction of their venerated names. These paradoxes and mysteries of Divine providence are ordained for our probation. They humble and confuse us now, but they will be cleared up by and by. Meanwhile it becomes us to profit by them, according to their design, not, indeed, to surrender a heart-felt conviction, to suppress an urgent conscience, to withhold a deserved rebuke, to forbear a solemn testimony ; but for the clearing of our mental vision, the establishing of our faith, the correcting of our judgments, the increasing of our candor, the enlarging of our sympathies, and the refining of our charity. Then we shall not dishonor Christ though we call things by their right names, and expose sophistry, or scout hypocrisy, or laugh at folly. We shall need not fear to brand an infidel, to scotch a deceiver, to rebuke a friend, or withstand a brother. Christian students will be hurt by none of these ; but by time-serving, sycophancy and double-dealing ; by childish evasions, unlawful concessions, deceitful subterfuges and hollow-hearted coalitions ; by shuffling for private advantage, manœuvring for a clique, catering for a party, or shouting with a majority.

is meritorious, for it implies virtuous and holy action, and consists in it. But faith is not meritorious ; for the saving faith of the Gospel is not strictly an act, but a principle ;— the cause or antecedent of action, of all virtuous willing and doing, and therefore not an actual righteousness itself. Besides, it is a principle not of man's production, but of God's. " It is the gift of God ;" and, being God's product, it constitutes no merit of the believing mind ; just as the more generic fact of regeneration is not man's righteousness, nor the effect of man's righteousness, but of God's sovereign mercy, and a stated antecedent of righteousness which cannot be confounded with righteousness itself.*

* I am not unmindful, here, that the Scripture literally calls upon men to repent, believe and love, specifically ; and also, generally, to renew their hearts ; that is, it requires of them holiness, and all the evangelical fruits of holiness, just as if these now fell within the limits of their *natural ability*. Nor am I unmindful with what confidence and zeal these commands of Scripture are frequently adduced in evidence of man's *natural ability* to obey them : and that this alleged natural ability consequently makes a great figure in our modern speculative theology. But I think it not adventurous to say, on the other hand, that these very commands of Scripture, in all their literality, prove, in their proper connections, the very contrary of this alleged natural ability. They help to constitute, according to the idiom of Scripture, that remarkable paradox by which God purposely makes the sinner's inability most evident to his own awakened mind, and convinces him of his absolute dependence on the grace and power of his Almighty Redeemer. He would thus most effectually subdue and humble men, and magnify, in their view, that work of his Spirit which alone reproduces the principle of holiness in the fallen soul.

For these remarkable commands stand not alone in Scripture. They belong to an economy which can be perfectly understood only when its several parts are taken in their natural relations to each other and the whole. Any partial and disintegrating process of interpretation is deceptive. It is disingenuous, onesided, and leaves out of view those very facts which are most important to a comprehensive understanding of the subject. It is dangerous ; for in connection with other similar interpretations of related doctrines of the Scripture, its effect is to falsify the whole economy, and to prevent or impair that state of intellectual *conviction* which, though it be not essentially prerequisite to the *conversion* of the soul, God has been pleased

Faith is sometimes described to us as if it were meritorious; and many preachers of the Gospel apparently make that mistake. But with how little reason this is said will appear, even if faith be considered a natural act of the self-determined mind, as justifying faith is not,

to make the ordinary and stated antecedent of it. But a brief explanation must now suffice.

Thus:—God said “Let there be light; and there was light.” He commanded nothing to produce something, and it did. Christ said to the dead Lazarus, “Come forth;” and he did; to the impotent man, “Stretch forth thine hand;” and he did; to Saul of Tarsus, “I am Jesus whom thou persecutest;” and Saul believed, and preached the faith he had destroyed. He says, in like manner, to others dead in sins, “Live;” and the new life of faith and love glows in their recovered souls. These analogous commands all equally illustrate natural inability, and supernatural power in overcoming it, alike in respect to related material, mental and moral natures. The supernatural power goes out with the command to prevail over the natural impotency, which it speaks into activity, over the death which it wakens into life. The nothingness and the death; the creation, the redemption and the new creation, are all made manifest; and Father, Son and Holy Ghost are glorified together. Christ does not command without giving evidence sufficient of his power to make the command effectual; and he commands that he may illustrate his all-sufficiency. While he says, “No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him,” he requires the coming, and when he pleases, exerts the drawing, and the impossible to man is made possible by God. We ‘work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for God worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ Christ thus practically harmonizes all his doctrines, and they are vindicated in their comprehensive unity and sublime efficacy to the world.

But when these facts of Scripture are separated, and placed out of the relations in which God reveals them, they are rendered unmeaning and contradictory, and they cannot be logically interpreted together. One or both must yield to some absurd violence of rationalistic exposition. If the Cross and the Regeneration are not viewed in strict connexion with the fall of man and his spiritual death, which they presuppose and make more fully evident, then one or all of these related facts become not facts, but mere topics for the exercise of a metaphysical ingenuity, and Scripture is a nose of wax. Beautiful they are as they stand together, in their simplicity, in the word of God; but monstrous, as they are put in opposition in the systems of the philosophers. Firebrands they are to wise men when the command to love meets the equally literal declaration “ye cannot,” on the arena of philosophical contention; but life giving they are to children when the heavenly music meets their ear in its touching and melting symphony, “Thy peo-

and not a supernatural principle produced by God, as it is ; for though there be a faith which is man's act, it is a mere assent to propositions, on proof, a mechanical operation, and after processes of reasoning which are mechanical, and not moral, and therefore not meritorious.

 ple shall be willing in the day of thy power." Who shall say that these children are not greatest after all, great in God's greatness, while they delight to be nothing, and less than nothing, that God may be all in all ?

I can imagine that such children, in their simplicity, should greatly perplex a philosopher, not merely in respect to his contradictory interpretations of Scripture, but his very theory of natural ability ; and that too without having any theory of their own. For it is obvious to ask what this alleged natural ability, except as a philosophical abstraction, and without regard to Scripture, is ? What was the natural ability of light to shine, or any other matter to produce itself before it was ? Or of Lazarus to live again when he was dead ? Or of the withered hand to restore the nervous energy which had been destroyed ? And, by equal reason, of the soul to love while it hates ? of a sinful current of affection to turn itself back to the fountain, and change the poisoned springs into living water ? What are these invisible principles of light and love, that reveal themselves in corresponding motions, affinities, attractions, repulsions ? What and where is the secret place where these principles originate, and whence they flow out for good or evil ? Is that secret place in *nature* ? What is that *nature* of a dead man, or of a hating soul, which has ability to live, or love ? What is the *natural* stimulus that awakens it ? What *natural* power destroys, not the organism in which life or love are manifested, but the principles themselves ? or reproduces them ? or sustains them under the difficulties of resisting *nature* ? To what *natural* retreat fled the love of Satan and his hosts when they rebelled and were thrust out of heaven ? or what *natural* motives would set it again in flame ? Or Judas's, or yours, or mine, if we be dead in sin ? I would that any wise man would instruct me better concerning this natural ability of death to live ; or enough, at least to set me on a hopeful search. I would be wise. My poor faculties reach not to this. I would that some would teach me who have explored this profound of wisdom ; if, indeed, it be in *nature*, and not altogether *supernatural* in God.

I must humbly profess that I cannot understand this alleged *natural ability* of the hating soul to love, or in what department of the complex fallen man to seek it. Yet, supposing it not absurd, as I believe it, but merely obscure and incomprehensible to my natural faculties, I would believe it, notwithstanding, if it were revealed. Or, if the Scripture were supposed silent on the subject, I would yet believe it, had there ever been *experiences* enough of good and true men to constitute a fair induction. I would even believe it, — though one swallow does not make a summer, — for any single well au-

Or, if supposed moral, it must partake of that imperfection which, definitely or indefinitely, is admitted by all men ; and imperfection is not righteousness, or the cause of righteousness, but is that very evil which makes a superinduced justification necessary to the salvation of the

thenticated case. If I could know, for certainty, of any man, or child, in this fallen world, that he had, out of any *natural ability*, loved God supremely, and his neighbor as himself, I would accept the philosophy which I now reject, and henceforth make it my interpreter of Scripture. But I must have the testimony of one who honestly believes that man is fallen and without good ; that salvation is only by the sacrifice of Christ, and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit ; and that these blessings, in provision and application, are according to God's good pleasure and grace ; for on these points I would not be guilty of supposing the Scripture silent ; and this question of natural ability is practically of little moment, except among those who would think themselves greatly injured by any disputing of their orthodoxy in these respects. Others ignore it, or leap over it altogether ; and doubtless, with their modicum, whether of Scriptural or metaphysical theology, they are wise. But is there in this world such an orthodox man ? or any man, but such an one as some critics would have God describe his servant Job — *by nature* perfect and upright, — who will say that he rose up, of his natural ability, out of the death of sin ? If such a man cannot be produced, — and I never heard of one, — and if, practically, there is no such thing as death *naturally* producing life, and sinful love *naturally* producing holy love, what boots it for men who would be wise, to contend, against the literal Scripture and experience, for a metaphysical fiction and abstraction which is nothing ? What does it profit, or rather what does it not pervert and destroy, to deny, for the sake of that chimera, the literal words of Christ, “ No man can come unto me except the Father who hath sent me draw him ;” to turn the Scripture against itself by contradictory interpretations ; to rend society, as Protestant Christendom is now rent, into innumerable factions ; and turn the world upside down ? Is this improvement ? By this way of progress shall we come out at last in the millenium ?

“ Shall the sinner then be blamed if God produce not in his dead soul this life of love ?” God forbid ! We blame him not for that. It were mockery to require of him what constitutes the exclusive and sovereign prerogative of God, just as it were to declare his natural ability to do what belongs only to supernatural power. We blame him not for that, but for the unloving heart which makes the sovereign act of God necessary to his salvation ; and because his unloving, unbelieving heart, self-moved, appreciates not, and refuses the supernatural power that in Christ Jesus causes the dead to live. These, and not that, constitute and aggravate his guilt. And when

soul; — a justification which is no where represented in Scripture to consist in a balancing of the good and bad actions of men, and a making up of the arithmetical deficiency, but as provided for those in whom dwelleth no good thing, In point of fact, experimentally, the true

the Spirit moves him, that aggravated guilt of unbelief, in respect to the proffered all-sufficiency of Christ, will be the greatest burden of his awakened mind. Under that effectual discipline of the Spirit it will put him to his deepest thoughts, his most distressing fears, his most agonizing prayers, perceiving then, as he must, that the more God has offered him a *supernatural* salvation, the stouter has been his *natural* refusal of it; and that now, the more earnestly he struggles, in the ability of nature, to set himself at liberty, the closer does he draw his chains about him. That terrible agony is the sinner's last effort of *natural ability*; and that last work of the convincing Spirit is attended, when God pleases, with that other work of the same Spirit which forms Christ Jesus in the soul the hope of glory. So reads the Scripture; and such is the *experience* which is according to the Word. Such is the testimony of good men in all the ages whose experience has taught them according to the Scripture rather than the substituted metaphysics of the schools. To this day even every true physician gives that prescription to awakened minds. He expects the conversion of the soul then only when it is convinced effectually of its absolute dependence on Almighty power. There are those who recommend a different specific, — a calculation of interests, a reckoning of the greatest amount of happiness, and a corresponding violent effort of *natural ability* to possess it. I do not call them true physicians. They put the sinner's agency out of its stated relation and proportion to the Divine efficiency, and dishonor Scripture. They abase not man, and exalt not God; and they cannot be true.

“But the Scripture must not be taken *literally* in its doctrine of faith and grace; for the alleged absolute dependance of man on God for regenerating mercy makes him a mere machine.”

All things are what God made them; and they cannot be otherwise. If God made man a machine he is a machine; and we cannot help it. If not, he is a moral agent, and can be neither less nor more. But God did not make him a machine. Consequently, he could not convert him into a machine without destroying the properties which constitute humanity. Man has undoubtedly mechanical faculties and powers, both of mind and body; that is, his mind and body *act*, exhibiting their proper phenomena, according to their respective laws. But God also gave him *life*, which a machine possesses not; and man's *action*, different from a machine's, is from that invisible and incomprehensible *principle* within. Yet life produces not *moral* action, which God refers to a higher and more subtle principle, distinguishing him alike from mechanical and brute natures, — the life of love.

believer does in no wise imagine the assent of his understanding to the truths of the Gospel to be meritorious, but only a physical belief, speculative, mechanical, and not vital ; and it is his constant prayer to be forgiven for the imperfections of his faith ; that is, because that be-

Man loves. That, and nothing else, makes him a moral being ; and having that he cannot but be a moral being. That mysterious principle of spiritual affinity draws him, in his normal state, to God ; just as all material natures, in wonderful analogy, are drawn by an equally mysterious principle of physical affinity to the central orb. If man fell in Adam, according to the Scripture, and lost this life of love, and, in that respect, became dishonored like the brutes that perish ; that is, if his love to God was turned to hate ; — for love, if it be not love, is hate ; — surely then the recovery of any man in Christ, if God pleases to give any man the Christian faith, no more makes him a machine than did God's original creative act. That new creation touches not the mechanism of the complex man. That mechanism fell not, but its central spring — the love. The restored love affects it not, except that henceforth it is moved and regulated as in its normal state. The restitution is not of *active* powers and faculties, but their original holy *principle* — affection ; and that restored affection argues God's particular attribute of mercy, as the original creation was an instance of his general goodness. Regeneration makes a new man, but only in respect to that which constitutes him a moral being — love. And because God pleases, in his mercy, to give him, through Jesus Christ, a holy instead of a sinful love, to restore the lost and broken up affinity of the loving soul to himself, does he, therefore, make him a machine ? Does he even reduce him to a brute ? The objection is absurd.

Great is the mystery of this new creation. But it is not greater than that of the original creation, nor more incredible ; for neither of them is absurd, and both are literal facts of Scripture. They stand in history and experience ; whereas the hypothesis of *natural ability*, on which the objector argues, is a mere fiction, equally opposed to both. It exceeds belief ; and its effect is only to blind or confuse belief, and thus evade the force of literal Scripture. The mind cannot entertain the idea as practical, that the sinful love should turn itself into holy love, that moral affection should counteract its natural law without a supernatural cause, — whatever that cause may be. I can believe in the supernatural cause producing not an excitement of an imaginary natural ability to love, but love itself, though I cannot comprehend it. But a philosopher only would accept a fiction which is absurd before a fact which is incomprehensible.

It is not to be supposed, after all, that our objector, who assumes that speculative fiction, and reasons from it against the doctrines of grace, believes it ; for belief has a substantive character ; it requires a foundation,

lief which is his own natural act, is without any good moral effect upon him, except as God gives it life and virtue by his Spirit. He feels, with the venerable Hooker, that if for any single act of his own coming from him without sin, he might be saved, yet would his salvation

and condescends not to rest on a mere conception. He has no belief whatever, but is an unbeliever, so long, and so far, as he stands *only* on that airy basis. He believes nothing about a sinful soul, except as that machinery which he calls the soul, works well or ill, in obedience to the sensibilities pertaining to that other machinery the body, subject to the infirmities of flesh and blood. It is our philosophical objector who is the materialist, despite his contrary pretensions. He objects to our doctrine of a fallen spirit because his philosophy reaches not to *essence*, which is out of sight, but to an *action*, which can be measured by the sense. *Love*, — the *principle*, — figures not in his reckoning of moral character; but *action*, its effect. He confounds the antecedent and the consequent, the tree and its fruit, and reduces them both to one aesthetical admeasurement, — utility, the greatest number of agreeable sensations. He makes his first definition of a moral being when that being becomes *an agent*; and the definition virtually excludes the primordial element of a moral nature, without which *moral agency* is impossible. His moral agent is a machine indeed, a mere automaton. The spring that moves it is not an interior spiritual life, but ——— homiletics. His homiletics move not to love, but action, to the counting of beads, or the giving of money; and moral character is measured by the extent of the mummary, or the magnitude of the subscription. Yet such sophistry has had the power of misleading, to a great extent, the churches of the reformation, on a road which, as I have already shown, must take them back ultimately, though they perceive it not, to Romanism. Hoodwinked they are, and will be, till the deceiver, under the pretence of greater liberty, leads them back to a more iron slavery; — and then too late for another reformation.

I shall here take it upon me to say, though at the risk of seeming unkindness towards some dead and living whom I most honor; and to say it because the times demand that we should honor Scripture more than any man or school, that, in my judgment, many great and good men, the lights of New England, as their fathers were up to the time of Edwards, have committed a great and perhaps incurable mistake, in respect to the theology of New England, by making, as some of the fathers, from the time of Edwards, sometimes seemed to make, an unwarrantable concession to the philosophers concerning *natural ability*, and other related subjects deeply affecting the integrity of the Gospel. They have admitted, or seemed to admit, this speculative fiction into their books and their discourse, and

be impossible, because that highest virtue which is his own, independently of God's grace, is merely formal, and seeming, and infinitely inadequate. No man ever heard an enlightened Christian preferring any plea for salvation on account of the meritoriousness of his faith, or any oth-

have consequently obliged themselves to put this, and other related fallacies, in virtual opposition to their formulas of doctrine.

The orthodox theology of New England, as it is, in distinction from that of our pilgrim fathers, and the standards of the primitive and reformed faith, is conformed extensively to this fashion of idolatry. It has captivated both ministers and people. Some who are most attached to the primitive and reformed standards still profess the error though it saps the foundation of the doctrines for which they would shed their blood. It puts them, unwittingly, against themselves. It ties their hands, when they most need to use them. It betrays them to inconsistent theories and interpretations, when occasions call for the most unequivocal and uncompromising defence of the simple truths of Scripture. It takes them, on some of the gravest questions, away from the sympathy of their best friends, or shuts their mouths in despairing silence, and leaves them to the tender mercies of the cruel. The worst is, that they do not comprehend the secret of their mistake; or they dread to relinquish a notion which has become inveterate and is popular, lest they should be obliged to adopt a contrary truth which has yet only an evil name, and no patronage. For example:—admitting the fiction of natural ability, of course, they are betrayed, often inadvertently, into a corresponding interpretation of Scripture which implies a progression of the race in virtue; its natural developement towards a perfect state; the sufficiency of an artificial propagandism; a marriage of civilization to Christianity; and a mixed millenium of the secular and the heavenly, of grace and nature; thus essentially dishonoring the doctrines of their creeds. They admit an exegetical element, on the one hand, which they deny on the other, and which, if consistently applied, would upset all the orthodox formulas of Christendom. They accept a past which is history, and a future which is a myth; an actual Christ in dying and rising from the dead for his covenanted and purchased kingdom, and a figurative Christ in returning from the “far country” to set up that kingdom in glory and majesty on the earth. They accept a Jerusalem which stood on solid mountains, and a New Jerusalem in the clouds, and not ‘coming down from God out of heaven;’ a people driven out of the promised land by fire and sword, and restored to it only in idea; and the earth and the heavens literally drowned with water, and burned with fire, and new heavens and a new earth in the imagination of the philosophers. Their archæology and eschatology are at war; and some, with equal unconcern, sub-

er act of his mind or life. The men who do it arrogantly and presumptuously in their philosophy, or inconsiderately in their discourse, would not dare to do it in their prayers. The conscience, unless greatly sophisticated and depraved, would stop them. Such a prayer was nev-

ject both, indifferently, to the interpretations of a loose speculative science. Because of these inconsistencies the philosophers put them at fault, and they consider not the occasion of their adversities, nor, as yet, greatly heed to know it. They see, all over Christendom, the sad reverses of what they believe to be the true and living Gospel; and, all over the pagan world, phantoms starting up to lure away the nations into a deeper darkness, faster than they can be overtaken by the heralds of the Cross; — they see, where Christ is named, innumerable false Christs turning away the people from the faith once delivered to the saints, and converting not prophecy alone, but doctrine, and all the Scripture, into fable; they see their ancient formulas forsaken, or reformed and desecrated to suit the spirit of a more liberated age, despite all their apologies, protests and lamentations; — they see faith almost ceasing from the earth, and the earth itself consequently shaken and convulsed by God's judgments; — yet, though their hearts are broken, and they have almost lost the power of song, they are compelled, in their captivity, to lift up their voice in acclamation over the alleged progress of sound learning and true virtue, and the hastening conversion of the world, to God and ——— Liberty; liberty, and ——— Happiness. They will not believe though a man declare it unto them; albeit their persons are dishonored, their books are laid upon the shelf, their presses are circumvented and restrained, their discourse is turned back upon them, and they are reduced to 'eat ashes like bread, and mingle their drink with weeping.'

What will startle these men of God from their bewildering dream? Our hearts bleed for them. But their deliverance will not come till they turn back, consistently and entirely, to the simple Gospel; to the Divine covenants; to fathers whom God purified in the fires of persecution, whose monuments were sacred till a wild and revolutionary philosophy struck its roots into the reformed soils of Christendom. We look, with a fond desire, that they will yet go back; for, otherwise, they will be hunted down, and the sharpest doubling cannot save them. They must believe only in God and in his Christ. God has but one economy of moral government, and that has but one consistent interpretation. Whoever will depart from that, as some of our New England sects have already done, and substitute their romantic naturalism for the literal Gospel, though popular gales may waft them proudly for a time, will at length encounter shipwreck, and the loss of all things. Whoever will play fast and loose, as these abler and better men have done, between *faith* and *reason*, may, indeed, save their life, but not their property. They will be left dependent on the charities of friends

er heard out of the synagogue of the Pharisee, or the conventicle of the fanatic.

And if faith, though considered an act, and not a principle of the mind, be not synonymous with justification, or equivalent to it, I know not what other act of the mind,

too poor to help them, or the humanities, such as they are, of a cold and inconstant world.

Oh, Origen! Origen! and ye Alexandrians, Cæsareans, and academicians, all! How can ye atone for the mischief ye have done to the sons of the pilgrims, to our loved New England? Ye have spoiled the home of the persecuted saints. They began to build, and ye twisted their foundations. They would have reared, notwithstanding, the best superstructure of this earth, but ye secretly interposed the wood, hay and stubble, which the fire must destroy. Ye have turned to disappointment the last *natural* hope of a distracted world; and Christ will make here his last and greatest demonstration of the insufficiency of man to carry on and carry out his principles of moral government, his doctrine of Church and State, till "The times of Restitution." Schoolmen! — I say it though a schoolman, and because a schoolman only might presume to say it, — ye have played falsely; — falsely, but not always fatally, for ye have often been unconsciously played upon: — ye have made not, as ye ought, **THE SCRIPTURE**, but, as ye ought not, "**PHILOSOPHY THE GUIDE OF LIFE.**" Your secret is, indeed, betrayed, and that can harm no more. But from that cast off, yet prolific seed, other varieties of illuminated sophistry, and angelic falsehood, have sprung up, and filled the schools. They have taken forms and bodies, without number, in a new, fresher and wilder generation, that will bring forth other and more poisonous fruits of selfish fallacies, chicaneries, intrigues, discords and revolutions, till the strong arm, and He who breaks it, shall be revealed.

But those excellent men, the lights of New England, and its glory, of whom I have taken this great liberty to speak, are blessed after all. God forbid that I should detract from their real worth, on account of what was mostly an accident of their times and their position; or refuse their guidance, in respect to essential truths of Scripture, or accredited formulas of faith which they still literally acknowledge, on account of philosophical errors which have captivated their imaginations, but which their hearts denounce. God chastens, but he will save them. They have assented to some fictions; but they have not, on that account, let go all realities. They have confessed to the depravity of a fallen world, to a redeeming and justifying Christ, and to a regenerating Spirit, as set forth in the words of Scripture, and embodied in their forms of faith; and they will stand on those foundations. Christ is their rock, their chief corner-stone, and that cannot be removed forever, nor they who build upon it. But had they not some-

or series of acts, could be thought to constitute a righteousness. Certainly, righteousness, in Scripture, is connected only with faith. Nothing could be more express than that we are justified by faith alone without the deeds of the law ; and if faith does not constitute righteousness, but is only its stated and conditional antecedent, there is no supposable act of ours for which we could hope to be accepted at the bar of God. If any such act be imagined, it must be either of the nature of faith, or independent of faith. But if faith be not righteousness, and meritorious, then, by necessity, whatever is of the nature of faith cannot be righteousness, and meritorious. If the

times bowed themselves, too reverently, in the house of Rimmon, they would have led God's people through, and not have been deprived of seeing, except from Pisgah's top, the promised land.

Yet, even these errors of great and good men God may make subservient to his higher glory. We shall see it, if, and so far as, a better advised generation of Christian students shall learn, from their mistakes, to call no man master. Emmons, Hopkins, Spring, Bellamy, Backus, Edwards, Calvin, Luther, — and all such ! Let students give them honor, so far as they followed Scripture. But let them glory only in Christ !

This note is prolonged beyond my intention ; perhaps beyond propriety ; and the reader may be in danger of forgetting the thread of the discourse. But truth in the margin may be sometimes of as much importance as truth in the text. I deem the things said to be of no little consequence in these distracted times, and therefore have said them, at some expense and hazard. I should not have chosen to say them, for others could do this better, with more authority, and to better purpose. But such persons might be even more reluctant. Perhaps they could not so well afford to do it as one who is likely to die sooner, and to have his judgment, not of men, but of God. Wherefore, let what is written take such course as God pleases. I am indifferent, provided truth is served ; though I would not serve truth at the expense of charity, if that were possible, on the whole. If any who may chance to read these pages judge that I have committed that offence, yet let them not altogether withhold their love, so far as I have not exceeded truth, and they shall have love for love, 'good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over,' though they administer, with equal reason, a more severe reproof. "Let the righteous smite me ; it shall be a kindness : and let him reprove me ; it shall be an excellent oil that shall not break my head : for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities."

imagined act be independent of faith, the question is settled on another ground ; for, “ Without faith it is impossible to please God.”

Yet, we have seen, on the ground of Christ’s redemption, the believer is justified and made righteous. What then is his righteousness, that great boon which he receives by faith, and which avails to everlasting life ? What can it be ? What does the Scripture affirm it to be, but the righteousness of Christ, “ The righteousness which is of God by faith ?” This is his name, “ The Lord our righteousness.” “ Who of God is made unto us . . . righteousness.” “ Now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested.” “ As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” “ Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” So saith the Scripture. So said those justified men, of old, who constructed their formulas of faith on the basis of Scripture, and a synopsis of it. They received Scripture as it is written. They interpreted Scripture by Scripture, and by the principles of natural religion as data recognized by Scripture, and exemplified in God’s methods of providence, and in his plan of moral government, and in the experience of Christian men, as set forth in Scripture. They knew what they were about ; and they who sneer at them take a responsibility that I would not bear for worlds. Let us observe their method, as we inquire particularly concerning the substance of justification :

1. In the formal sense :
2. In the vital sense :
3. In these senses combined.

1. Formally. I observe here that there are certain proper formal notions of government which are original and fundamental ;—*principia* ;— the basis of all moral reas-

oning and true virtue, from which if we depart we soon find it impossible to make our reckoning, and are lost in the endless mazes of speculation and hypothesis. These principles are settled in natural religion ; though it has been the tendency of all ages to depart from them, and the world, in successive periods, has been, consequently, confounded, and nation after nation has been wrecked, making successive miraculous interpositions of God and formal revelations necessary, to revive the remembrance of them, in order to any reformation of society, or the holding of the fallen world together. The revelations have more authoritatively explained and enforced these natural and fundamental principles, though, by reason of the same perversities of mankind, their clearer light has been obscured ; they have been misinterpreted by false philosophies ; deceitful lights have more disastrously misled the alienated world ; and other revolutions and Divine interpositions have succeeded, and are ordained, on the same account, to succeed, until “ The times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

Among these original and fundamental principles of natural and revealed religion from which society is now misled, as I have already observed, by Romanism and neology, more than in any antecedent period of history, is the proper personality of God, and his independent, sovereign and exclusive right to govern his own world, according to his own infinite and incomprehensible perfections. All ethics and theology, so far as not corrupted by the sensuous or rationalistic systems of the schools, in all ages, have stood on this basis, affirming God’s absolute perfection, his supreme and universal government, and denying the right of government, or interference, to any other being. For a creature, from the necessity of

the case, cannot be supposed to have any independent existence, power, authority, right, or dominion. Creatures can have no rights in respect to the Creator, or to fellow creatures, but such as are delegated by God; and these are not strictly *rights*, — for the right of a dependent creature is preposterous, and the right of sinful and rebellious creatures is more absurd, — but privileges and immunities mercifully conferred on them during their state of reprieve, probation and discipline, as declared by Scripture, until Christ, the manifested God, for whose sake this state of probation is ordained, shall finish his present work of intercession, cast down all his enemies, restore the fallen world to its allegiance, and, in the issue, deliver up his purchased, sanctified and glorified kingdom to the Father. All this is of Christ, the God-man, who made the worlds, not for the sake of creatures, but for his own sake, ‘that unto principalities and powers he might make known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ The idea, now so common, that God made the worlds for man, or the happiness of man, or any other creature, or that the creature’s happiness is an end of the Divine government over the worlds, is so merely imaginative and hypothetical that the reason can have nothing to do with it, upon any solid admission of a personal God. Humanity, and especially, our fallen humanity, be it representative in the Pope, or the Protestant philosopher, or diffused and popular, is not the Godhead, nor an equivalent to it, by immeasurable degrees; and human happiness has, consequently, no right to be considered as God’s end, but only as a stated consequence of obedience to God’s will; — of obedience rendered, spontaneously and conscientiously, with reference to the only worthy and the exclusive end of being, — the glory of

the Creator. Otherwise we are virtually Pantheists, resolving the Godhead into creature-hood, or raising the creature into a developement of the Godhead, annulling every natural notion, or supernatural revelation of a supreme Divinity.

It results from this, agreeably to natural and revealed religion, that all treason, rebellion and sin, wherever or by whomever committed, are committed against God alone. An angel does not sin against a fellow angel, and man does not sin against a fellow man. Whatever injury they inflict, respectively, upon each other, or upon other orders of beings, is a wrong done to God's creatures, in violation of the natures, relations and conditions which he has constituted and ordained. Of this wrong subordinate governments, as his agents and representatives, may take formal cognizance, so far as social interests are involved, in subjection to his promulgated principles and laws; but the sin is against God; and the interior and ultimate punishment of it is reserved by him, as the infinite ruler and disposer of all. When we speak of rights, "the rights of man," — and many persons now seem to speak or think of nothing else, — we speak as natural and revealed religion never speaks, but as it is interpreted by its interested expositors. We use a mere technical or speculative fiction, which, when it passes out of conventional discourse, and usurps, in speculative systems, the place of a substantial verity, works incalculable mischief; for it derogates from the only substantial authority which is Divine, and practically subverts the principles of moral government. Moral government exists, of necessity, in God alone; and all sin and transgression relate to his universal, supreme and absolute authority. Upon any other idea sin resolves itself, agreeably to the old pagan notions, and the modern infidel perversions,

into mere injuriousness, disturbance, disorganization, which are not moral, but mechanical ; man's present interests are put above the Divine honor ; and God is virtually ruled out of his own world. So David thought not, when God brought home to his mind the true nature of his adulterous and murderous acts; but confessed, in the spirit of the only genuine repentance, " Against thee, thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest." So Paul thought not, when he exclaimed in the bitterness of an awakened conscience, " Oh wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?"

It is also another consequence, verified by natural and revealed religion, that all sin and transgression, being committed against God alone, are essentially and morally dishonorable and derogatory to his character and government, and practically subversive of his righteous authority, so that they could not subsist together. The sinner must be restrained and punished, or universal anarchy and destruction would ensue. But God cannot cease to exercise a moral government, and therefore the penalty of the law must be enforced. This is a principle of all governments, whether God's supreme and universal government, or the subordinate governments which he has delegated to his creatures, in the family, the state, the church. It is the principle of every unrequired voluntary society ; and, without it, any social state would clearly be impossible. The mind cannot entertain a different idea, except in that state of somnolency and madness which the Scripture describes as the present abnormal state of this world, so far as deprived of the incidental and collateral influence of the Revelations ; — a state from which it is only partially delivered during this

mixed and disciplinary scene, and will be effectually and absolutely delivered only when the curse of sin shall be taken off, and Christ shall make all things new.

It is also another and more pointed consequence, that all sin and transgression, being utterly contrary to the law of God and subversive of it, could not be consistently forgiven without reparation made to the violated law; and the sinner and transgressor, though forgiven, could not hold a place in the favor of God, without a superinduced righteousness in all respects equal to the law's demands. For, if God should merely pass over the wrong done to his government; or, if he should accept the wrongdoer in his contracted state of imperfection, that would virtually nullify his absolute authority, and detract from the essential perfectness of his moral system. The sinner can make no restitution for his past delinquencies. His repentance, or his future obedience, if they were possible without a supernatural provision of God, though they might not be useless, could restore nothing. They could not put him back to the integrity of a sinless state. Yet, if, notwithstanding, he should have a place with beings who have never sinned, that would constitute a declaration from God that moral distinctions are mutable and of no practical importance. Upon merely humanitarian grounds he might repair his wrong by the payment of money, or by other good offices to the injured party; or, if he did not, it would be of little consequence, except for temporary convenience or utility. But admit the Godhead, and there is no evidence, but the contrary, that sin could be pardoned without satisfaction, or that a being of contracted imperfection and guilt could be treated as if he had never fallen. For guilt pertains not to a mere action, but the informing spirit. It is vital and essential;

and the loss of essential virtue is a loss that God only can repair. Whether he will do it, in any case, or how, constitutes the great problem of justification which the Scripture only can resolve. And these principles I understand to be in accordance with the judgment of learned civilians and legislators of all periods. They have proceeded upon them, in their commentaries and enactments, as necessary to the social state, although they have not unfrequently ignored them, inconsistently, in their theological speculations, and in matters of political expediency.

Christ resolves this problem. He meets the difficult conditions of moral government. He stands mysteriously in our stead, a sufferer for our sins. He is made sin for us. He bears our iniquities ; and his perfect righteousness is imputed to us, and reckoned to our account ; — our sins to him, his righteousness to us. His death is our plea for pardon ; his merits for our justification. The one absolves from guilt, the other constitutes virtue. The ideas of mediation, substitution, satisfaction, which have their correspondencies and analogies throughout the constitution and course of nature, agreeably to which the whole system of nature is carried on, though as matters of religious verity, and a ground of religious hope, they are unknown to natural religion, and undiscoverable by it, have a practical realization in the Scripture. They constitute the distinctive peculiarities of the Christian system. Without them Christianity has no peculiar glory, and is of no more value than any system of pagan ethics, except as Christ and his Apostles had a more excited genius, a greater comprehension and a purer morality than the philosophers whom they denounced. It would be impossible to represent or express these ideas, by language, or to describe, in terms, facts in accordance

with them, if this is not done in the language of Scripture. We might as well have no Revelation by language, — and without language a Revelation would be impossible, — if it be allowable to put upon the words of Scripture a fanciful and speculative interpretation which makes them descriptive of something else, and virtually annuls their literal meaning. If a ransom, a sacrifice, a propitiation, a price, a purchase, a redemption, be a mere symbol of the Divine compassion; if Christ, our righteousness, be merely Christ, our teacher, our revealer, our example of benevolence, self-denial, suffering and patience, then language is not a true representative and vehicle of thought, and the church that is built upon it becomes, as our modern Protestantism has become, by reason of such uncertain expositions, a Babel of confusions. We reject them all. We would sooner say with Bolingbroke, — “the Bible declares the doctrines of grace, but I do not believe the Bible,” than with the neologist, “I accept the Bible, but do not believe the doctrines.” An honest enemy is better than a treacherous friend. A rough wind that threatens to drive us on the rocks, is better than a false beacon-light that would misguide us. We should stand a better chance with the wind. If Apollyon had been wise when he withstood Christian in the valley, he would have put on an angel’s dress, and offered him safe conduct. He has grown wiser by his past mistakes.

Wherefore we conclude that the formal substance of our justification is Christ’s perfect righteousness. We stand before God, if we stand at all, not in our own right, for we have no original, independent right, but a privilege conferred by God, and that privilege we have forfeited and lost by sin. We cannot stand in a neighbor’s right, for he is equally dependent, and under a similar

condemnation. “No man can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.” We cannot stand in the right of faith ; for it is by faith that we have access to the grace wherein we stand ; — grace, and not personal merit ; — and faith, not a meritorious cause, but a Divinely appointed means. There is no conceivable right in which we can stand, but that which is set forth in Scripture, for the knowledge of which we are indebted to that alone, — the right of Christ. The corresponding discourse of Christians, whether doctrinal or emotional, in all the ages, is simply equivalent to the literal Scripture. It points to the law broken by the fallen race ; the broken law fulfilled by Christ, magnified and made honorable by his expiatory death ; and to his merits which are actual and infinite, accepted instead of ours which are impossible. The whole is a provision of God, not as a mercenary master, but a righteous governor, reconciling, harmonizing and displaying all his moral attributes. It is not discoverable, or imaginable by us, beforehand ; but, when revealed, then, evidently, though incomprehensibly, adapted to the necessities of a fallen race, correspondent to various analogies in the course of God’s natural providence, and infinitely beneficial, in respect to moral impression, upon the worlds.

Against this revealed economy no objections, but such as are merely speculative and fanciful, can be suggested. If I am destitute of true virtue, by nature and in principle ; if I am an actual transgressor ; if I lie under the penalty of guilt ; if God, who declares these facts of my condition, also reveals his Son from heaven, a ransom and a surety ; if he gives me assurance that through faith in Jesus Christ, he will impute and reckon to me Christ’s perfect righteousness ; and that for Christ’s sake I may be treated as though I had never sinned, and at-

tain even to a higher glory, inasmuch as Christ's merits are infinitely greater than mine could have been ; — why does any man yet find fault ? Does he say that this is an unphilosophical way of governing the world ? But it is according to God's simple Revelations ; it is confirmed by experience, analogy and history ; and it meets the conscious wants of man. What better philosophy would he have than that ? Does he affirm that he cannot reconcile it with his *ideas*, that an innocent person should suffer for the guilty ; that the merits of Christ, or any other being, should be supererogatory and imputable to sinners ; or that a sinful being should be accepted for the righteousness of another ? Yet, if God affirms it, and if it actually inspires myriads of penitent souls with the hope of eternal life ; what are his *ideas* and notions worth in comparison with this ? Surely, if any man cannot reconcile the government of God, as declared in God's own word, to his ideas, it becomes him to reconcile his ideas to the government of God. Surely, this whole question is not a question of philosophical fitness and propriety, according to our poor comprehension of things, but a question of fact on Divine authority. A reasonable man might well be content to leave all such questions of philosophical fitness and propriety to God himself, who alone is able to judge of such high matters that concern his own integrity and glory, and not assume to measure the Divine wisdom by his own. Who, in his right mind, could refuse, even in idea, the proffered righteousness of Christ, and put himself upon the only possible alternative of pleading his own righteousness at the bar of God ? Who of us would choose to go before “ The great white throne,” in such “ filthy rags ” ?

And, as we thus reasonably conclude, so would we heartily accept the righteousness of Christ as the formal

substance of our justification. We would heartily accept this Scripture doctrine, though indebted solely to the Scripture for it ; and accordingly delight in Scripture as making known what, otherwise, the reason never could have discovered, and, though revealed, refuses, in its natural blindness, to admit. We would hold to it, against all the artifices of the perverted reason, standing, as it does, on the most literal, direct, unambiguous language of the Scripture ; harmonizing, as it does, with all the known and settled principles and traditions of natural religion ; sustained, as it is, by instinctive, experimental, and analogical science ; corresponding, as it does, with the known methods of Divine providence, and the conscious exercises of pious men in all the ages. There is no knowledge with which it agrees not, but speculative knowledge, — the boasted philosophy of Paul's time and ours. How much that is worth, in the comparison, it becomes us to consider well, lest we exchange those old lights which have led so many pilgrims to glory, for those flashing meteors that so many others, captivated by their fictitious brilliancy, have followed to perdition. One may reasonably admire such coruscations, for a moment, as he would, occasionally, sit up, for a night, to observe a meteoric shower, or to seek a comet. But let not our observatories, sacred to a higher science, be engaged only by such curiosities as these, and darkened to the sun, and moon, and stars which God has fixed and settled in the heavens to guide us.

2. The vital sense of justification.

I am afraid to speak here. The theme is too wonderful. None but deeply convicted, and deeply distressed, and deeply comforted persons, effectually taught and disciplined by the Holy Ghost, can, with any near approach to the meaning of Scripture, appreciate, or describe, the

believer's vital union to Christ. It belongs not to these days to do it, when vision is ceasing, and all we can do is to desire to know. It belongs, least of all, to me. I would rather choose to go back, and sit by the poor woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head ; and learn of her. I would go back to those despised and persecuted saints, of a more primitive and uncorrupt period, the confessors and martyrs 'who wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy ;' — and learn of them. We cannot think, nor reason, nor know, nor feel, nor discourse like them. How could we, in an age of all-pervading secularity, an age of intellectualized, idealized religion, an age of imagery, of æsthetical refinement, of political finesse, of steaming curiosity, of profane and self-aggrandizing independence ; an age when Christianity stands not so much upon the text as the commentary ; not in the teaching of the Spirit, as the pictorial illustration ; not the prayerful quiet of the closet, as the bustle and shouting of the anniversary ; not in the conscience and the heart, as in formal display and mechanical operation ; not by the gentle dews of grace, as by educational stimulus, the thrift of trade, and the march of science ; great in the greatness of a self-magnifying world ; rich in its deceitful riches ; honorable in its spectral honors ; learned in its fictitious learning ; refined in its meretricious finery ; and mighty in its material power ; — how could we, in such an age of worldly activity, advancement, ambition, splendor, glorying, when Christianity reckons upon its worldly strength, the patronage of the worldly great, and counts upon their sanction and certificate ; when it is charmed with their applause, and is hopeful of appropriating their stores of wisdom, the

influence of their position, and their hoards of money ; when it calls upon philosophy to instruct it, upon art for its adornment, and even upon fashion for its address ; how could we, under the overwhelming pressure of worldly cares, the confusions of worldly intercourse, the bewildering influence of worldly sophistry, the inflations of worldly conceits, the seductions of worldly glory, the comforts of worldly independence, the contentment of worldly security, and the vaunted certainty of worldly progress ; — under disadvantages like these, how could we know, or feel, or speak, like the men whom the world hated and drove out of it, for Christ's sake ; or, while it suffered them to live in it, hunted to the dens and caverns of the mountains ? I can but faintly echo their voice ; and should refrain from that, but that the topic before me is indispensable to my subject, and I must treat it as I best may.

Yet, if I could speak like them, it would be only to utter, with a juster emphasis than I can now command, and in more fit relations, and with the outflowing of a more experienced and loving heart, the words of Scripture. Deeply as the vital truth entered into their souls, and their sublimated faith trusted to it, they knew it only as it is written. They did not undertake to explain the mystery of the God-man, how the Divine descended to the human, or the human was raised to the Divine, and the incarnate Son became two natures and one person forever. Equally they did not undertake to explain the corresponding mystery of regenerate natures, brought by the incomprehensible power of the Holy Ghost, into indivisible and perpetual union with the Divine Redeemer. They had no more natural ability to understand or expound these supernatural verities than to love the author of them, without a corresponding supernatural gift,

— a gift which they had not received of comprehension, but only of love without it ; — a gift of receiving and loving an incomprehensible benefactor. They understood not what was not intended to be unfolded in the present state of discipline and trial ; and it was their excellence that what the reason could not search out, their childlike faith accepted on the authority of God. They knew that Christ did not speak vainly, in that memorable prayer for his disciples, “ That they all may be one, even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us.” “ And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one as we are one ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” They had already, by the new consciousness of faith, an earnest of those prophetic assurances of Christ, — “ Because I live ye shall live also. *At that day* ye shall know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.” It was no cunningly devised fable which they accepted, in the declaration of the inspired Apostles, — “ The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you ; and as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is no lie, and, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.” “ We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true ; and we are him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” This was their confession, and it is ours, ‘not of the wisdom of this world, but of the hidden wisdom before ordained to our glory,’ — that fallen human natures, by faith, are taken up, mysteriously, in the person of the sinless Christ, to an alliance with the Godhead, and, therefore, and thenceforward, through

Christ's redemption, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, the sinful humanity is made a partaker of the Divine nature, and consequently an heir of glory, honor and immortality. We receive that mystery, hid for ages and generations, now not explained, but manifested to the saints, 'to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you the hope of glory.' That is it, — the statement of a vital fact, and not the dogma of a speculative creed ; words that are spirit and life, and not the utterance of sentimental passion, nor the intense expression of an overwrought imagination ; for, on such a theme, a literal language, or any figures naturally significant of the facts described, could not be intense, nor begin to reach the intensity of the Divine reality.

I cannot doubt, from the representations of the Scripture, that this mystery involves a vital and essential union between every new-born soul and Christ, a union as real, in its order, as that which took place between the man and the Godhead, in the person of our glorious Lord. I say union, and not identity, whereby the vital and essential excellence of the one becomes personally and morally attributable to the other, and is actually imputed and reckoned to the other, independently and irrespectively of his own proper character which is imperfect, and sinful, and wholly unacceptable to God. God looks not on the Christian, but the Christ that dwelleth in him ; and his virtue is not his own, but Christ's. It is the character, the impress and image of the sinless Divine put upon the sinful human ; and because it is not mechanical, but moral and essential, therefore transfusing and transforming ; so that on account of this transfused and transforming life of Christ alone it is, that the believing soul has a proper substantive jus-

tification before God, its pardon having been beforehand purchased and sealed by atoning blood. God justifies the believer, and accepts him, henceforth, not for the merit of his own works, for they are evil and abominable ; nor for the merit of his faith, for that is God's gift, and not the believer's own natural act, which is merely a mechanical and formal exercise of the understanding, and therefore not moral and meritorious ; or, if absurdly supposed moral, yet infinitely imperfect, and therefore not a righteousness, nor a cause of righteousness ; — but God justifies and accepts him for the sake alone of the Christ who dwelleth in him as in a temple, sanctifying the place of his gratuitous habitation, and preparing it, by the wholesome influence of his grace, for a resurrection-state of glory. Christ, the indwelling, informing, transforming Christ is all. Every good thought, sentiment, judgment, affection, desire, volition, purpose, action, are not the fruit and product of the believer's soul, according to its own natural working, but of the Spirit proceeding forth from the Father and the Son, and referable to him alone. All the work of sanctification, from the beginning to the end, is Christ's. Whatever holy activity the believer himself puts forth, in all the discipline of the Christian life, is from the ulterior activity of the indwelling Christ, according to God's everlasting covenant. Whenever God, for any of his ends of discipline, withholds that grace, and leaves the Christian to the proper working of his own fallen nature, he falls away. He is likely to become a greater sinner than before, because of his greater contempt of sanctifying blood, and his despite to the Spirit of grace. He would become an adulterer and murderer with David, an idolater with Solomon, a Christ-denying blasphemer with Peter. He would be lost absolutely, after all his heavenly experience, and sink from

his height of privilege into the lowest hell, if Christ could ever give up his purchased possession, or efface his own image, or relinquish to the adversary the prey that he had rescued, or cease to pray for the poor, harassed and tempted soul, that its faith might not absolutely fail. But that is impossible. “This is the Father’s will who hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but raise it up again at the last day.”

It is the thought of this transforming image of Christ impressed upon the believer, and of the Divine nature indwelling, that so poignantly touches his sensibilities, when this vital and all-sufficient righteousness is denied, and a natural righteousness is substituted for it, either through the indifferent wantonness of ungodliness, or the ambitious and pretending, but jejune and heartless speculations of a false philosophy. It is this which sometimes makes him cry out with the passionate grief of the Magdalene, “They have taken away the Lord, and we know not where they have laid him;” or to reiterate the kind, but sturdy rebuke of Paul to the men of his day, ‘Who, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.’ It is the believer’s experience of this vital truth, that does most ‘establish, strengthen, settle him.’ It is this which awakens his profound grief at all departures from it among the professed friends of Christ, even those incipient departures which are not perceived, or not cared for, by men of a less practised and anxious discrimination, but soon, unchecked, start off the unsuspecting churches from the true foundation. It is this experience, according to the literal Scripture; and it is that great body of experiences, constituting the common sense of the faithful, in distinction from the

common sense of mankind, in general, who have no similar experience ; — it is this experience, constituting also a real knowledge, in distinction from the vague teachings of speculative and conjectural expositors ; — it is this vital experience constituting, moreover, an intuitional and spiritual apprehension of the Gospel, in distinction from the false spiritualism and mock inspiration of excited genius ; — it is this which assures him with more than the force of moral certainty, — for it is another, a superinduced consciousness of the new-born soul,— and brings him into loving sympathy and fellowship with all “the sacramental host of God’s elect.” He loves them, not for their own sakes, but for the Christ who dwelleth in them; and because their otherwise discordant and jarring elements are fused in the common love of Christ, not theirs, but his, which is shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost. It is with him and them, as, once, in a better age, “Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and Mesopotamians, and Cappadocians, Phrygians and Pamphylians, Cretes and Arabians,” forswore the antipathies of color, caste, nation, race, government, philosophy, religion, through the centralizing and assimilating power of the common indwelling Christ. It is sometimes, as you may have seen, in the earlier awakenings of our own times, a particular Church of Christ, moved by his Spirit, forgetting, for the occasion, sex and age, rank and place ; the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the learned and ignorant together, not now mutually repelled by disagreeable tempers, uncouth address, personal or domestic feuds, political animosities, the rivalries of study, the competitions of trade, or other similar causes of alienation, jealousy, or hate, but weeping or rejoicing, confessing or praising, in the social meeting, or at the sacramental board, as the single

vital influence, the life of love and faith has proceeded forth upon them from heaven. It was the common Christ revisiting his temple, and rekindling the fire upon the altar of their hearts. It was the common indwelling Christ who shone through their eyes, and suffused their cheeks, and vibrated on their tongues, as they repeated the glory in the highest to him, ‘who redeemed them by his blood, and made them Kings and Priests unto God.’*

* I have made allusion, in the paragraph above, to that experience which is according to literal Scripture, in distinction from that which is shaped variously, to the fashions of philosophy, because it is in respect to vital and experimental piety that neology, in all its characteristic types and manifestations, and especially in its newest and most refined, does most dishonor Christ. It dishonors him by substituting notions and theories, which are merely conceptional and lifeless, for substantive doctrines of Scripture, which are true representations of Divine realities, and the only stated instrument by which the Spirit of God sanctifies the soul. It exalts an emotional excitement, a working of sensibilities which are consequent upon merely natural notions and ideas, above that penitence, faith and love which the Spirit produces only by the supernatural truth. It captivates the unthinking and undiscerning who distinguish not between the nominal and real in religion; or, if they did, would follow rather semblances and appearances, which disturb not the conscience, and awaken no apprehensions of danger, or sense of dependence on the regenerating grace of God. It claims for itself from others, on account of this seeming virtue, and controlling influence, a charity of fellowship which is due only to true religion. It reproaches those who withhold that fellowship out of fidelity to Christ. It puts them under the ban of an invidious public sentiment which becomes more exasperated and noisy till it issues in overt jarrings, persecutions and revolutions. Such is the history of all departures from the Word of God, of all sects and denominations, composed mainly even of Christian men, when their vital union to Christ has been impaired by exalting their chimeras and puzzles above the doctrines of the Cross. Such is the state of Protestant Christendom, of New England, at this day. The fact, and the true account of it, though “new themes,” deserve very serious consideration from all the friends of Christ. The men of sacred history should see to it.

He must be an indifferent student, and a loose observer, who has failed to perceive, in general, the remarkable developements and changed aspects of philosophy, since the beginning of the present century; or who has not measured, to some extent, its increased influence upon theology, ethics, politics, legislation, and all the related interests of life. It has set loose and

3. The substance of justification in the formal and vital senses combined.

The Church is the body of Christ ; and every Christian is a member in particular. Yet is the Church not a dead body, but a living. Accordingly, the figure rep-

well nigh crazed the mind of the civilized world, previously inflamed, as it had been, by the illuminism which began even in the times of Luther ; just as the other face of the man of sin had been unveiled in the days of the Apostles. It has put society to its utmost stretch of speculative activity, seeking for the good which it would not accept from the true Christ, among the phantoms of civil and religious liberty, an imaginary perfect church and state, without him. Nothing has been able to restrain it, or hardly to regulate its delirious movement. Usage, precedent, Scripture, the Divine ordinances, and even policy and expediency, or the sad experience of past ages, have been equally disregarded in its rash efforts to gain an Utopian paradise, and drive back the cherubim and the flaming sword from the tree of life. The wonderful material excitement and progress of the age are a proper sign and evidence of the increase of motive power in its philosophical ideas. They are the natural measure of each other.

This is equally true of all the philosophies ; for the reaction to sensualism has been as violent as the overaction of idealism. Rome has become more vitalized even by its political reverses, and has controverted, with an ability unknown for centuries, the adverse rationalistic tendencies of the times. It has found not its least able champion in our own New England, in one who was scared back too far from the abyss of unbelief into which he had well nigh slipped, and went over to the other extreme of the natural mind, to believe a lie.* It transcends its old limits, through the fervor of its awakened spirit. It begins to speculate on its own account. As if

* Mr. Brownson is a very zealous worshipper of his sensuous idol, and as sincere as any devotee can be, in mistaking his image for the living God ; as if the greatest opposite to a falsehood were the greatest truth, and there were no *via media*, a strait and narrow way, between them. Put Christ is just as dark to him as to the contrary philosophers whom he so well chastises. Few men better understand than he the fallacies of these inflated and vapid reasoners, or defend, with greater ability, the objective of Christianity which is something, against their fictions and abstractions which are nothing. But his objective Christ is all in all, a mere image, and no better because it has a body, and is dressed in scarlet. The warfare between him and the neologists is philosophical, on his part, as well as theirs, and of no more account ; for there is little to choose between a *crucifix* and an *idea*, a picture on the wall, and a picture in the brain. He gains nothing except that his iron sinews make him a better wrestler than the exquisites on the other side ; or would, if they dared the grapple. Their vapoing sentiments are no match for his hard-faced dialectics. But neither party gains the sanctuary. The one is too volatile, and flies over it ; the other is prone, and stumbles on the threshold.

resents the company of truly regenerate and Christian persons, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and united to him by a living faith ; — the general company of all ages, countries and climes ; and the particular persons, of all denominational communions who sympathise in the

concerned lest water should not wash, nor ghostly power absolve it, it dreams, confusedly, of succors and enlargement from "humanity," which it has so long insulted and betrayed. It makes stiff compliments to the people. It affects democracy, enthusiasm, reform. It drinks intoxicating

Mr. Brownson deserves great credit for his persevering industry, his knowledge, and his outspoken independence. These are worthy of a better cause. Few men have so large a comprehension of fundamental natural truths. In this respect he puts most of our modern Protestants to shame, and their cause to infinite disadvantage. Few so well appreciate ethics and theology, so far as they stand in natural religion ; or so far as, standing in natural religion, they are made authoritative by a supernatural revelation ; or so far as established by the miraculous evidences of the Gospel, they constitute the proper natural basis of the Christian church. In these respects he is, sometimes, a host. But into the supernatural revelation, when he has faithfully planted and defended it, he penetrates not, except by wax candles. He accepts not the guidance of the Holy Spirit, except as that Spirit is supposed to utter its contradictory responses through an earthly oracle. A father is more to him than an Apostle ; and a council of fathers than the college of the twelve ; and the Pope than the Paraclete. Of the *Divine* life of faith, or of christian liberty, he has no appreciation, but of the *ecclesiastical* life of credulity and submission ; and the church that he would build up, is, consequently, a natural church only, with a christian name ; born of water, but not of the Spirit. It is lifeless and rotten lumber, piled confusedly upon a rock, indeed, but a dead Peter instead of the living Christ. In his reaction from speculative infidelity had he stopped midway at the true Christ, instead of going as far over upon the other side, a living faith would have kept him equi-distant from the merely objective Christ which he now extravagantly exalts, and the merely subjective Christ which he properly denies. It would have harmonized in his mind the Christ of the new heart and the Christ of the primitive ordinances ; and then the spiritual, which is of grace, would have had its legitimate supremacy, and the ritual, which is of the letter, would have been reduced to its constitutional simplicity. He would have learned at the cross, that the true church of the Gospel is not, during this *æon* of Christianity, the *Holy Catholic*, but the *Holy Elect* ; an *ἐκκλησία*, called out from a dead world, and not comprehensive of it ; a church chosen, and therefore sanctified and baptized ; not baptized, and therefore sanctified and chosen ; and that over this house of God there is but one High Priest who is consecrated forevermore. He would have learned that all Rabbinism is of the earth, and not of Christ ; and is equally forbidden and denounced by Christ, whether it be on the right hand, or the left ; that, practically, there is little to choose, in point of dignity or safety, between speculative flights beyond the planets, and burrowing in heaps of mediæval rubbish ; that his type of philosophy tends to no advantage, personal, social, or political, over that which he has renounced, except as a Gregory or a devotee, at Rome, are better than a Robespierre or a *sana-culotta*, at Paris ; and that JERUSALEM, the only

common experience of regenerate and believing minds. They are not the Church in the sense of any formal and visible catholic embodiment; or that the formal ordinances of a visible catholic church, could, in the nature of the case, or do, by supernatural appointment, produce,

gas, as if to be nerved, unconsciously, for its coming sharp, successful, but but ultimately fatal struggle for the kingdoms of this world.

The ultimate question between these competitors of the sense and reason, is a question of spiritual supremacy. Their aim, respectively, is conversion or extermination. Their strife will not be moral, but of violence, to determine which shall set up its peculiar type of naturalism above the supernatural Gospel; whether this or that shall be the authoritative interpreter of the Scripture, and thereby acquire the government of the world. For this the nations of christendom are now putting on the harness. Mohammed merely gives occasion; and is likely to be crushed, politically, between them; though his ultimate destruction be deferred till the time of their catastrophe. The great impending warfare is religious. And the true issue will be not so much between the cross and the crescent, as the rival forces of false Christianity, — *superstition* and *fanaticism*. It will be political only, inasmuch as despotism and liberty are the most convenient watchwords, and can muster the largest material forces. Both equally refuse Christ. They constitute together the Antichrist, the many Antichrists of Scripture, the beast and the false prophet, that all hasten to their judgment. We shall see what will be, when the stronger punishes the weaker; when the greatest falsehood yields to the most flagrant impiety; when the bear exacts tribute of the other beasts of the field; when emasculated, bankrupt, and volcanic nations are bestridden by a rude and ruthless Colossus; when his iron power grows bold, insolent, vindictive, persecuting; and He, whose

mother of the elect, whether Jews or Gentiles, though trodden down for a season by impious feet, is the only ordained seat of universal government. Then, too, he would have understood the prophesying which holds not of any unconsecrated naturalism, whether its seat be in Rome or Athens, the Vatican or the Arcopagus, nor of any merely conceptional or allegorical supernatural church, or supernatural heaven, but the literal Zion and Jerusalem, the sacred place of the incarnation and the resurrection, when the feet of the Deliverer shall stand again on the mount of Olives; and her days of oppression, and mourning, and sackcloth, shall be ended; and "The righteousness thereof shall go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth; and she shall also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of her God." Is it too late for his great mistake to be corrected? Or the greater mistake of the opposite rationalizing schools? Will they not cast their respective 'idols to the moles and the bats?' Shall an offended Saviour have occasion to weep over them, as over the men of his time, who would not be gathered, before their house was left unto them desolate?

confer, or imply true Christian virtue ; which is the lie of Romanism. For, equally according to nature, experience and Scripture, life and organization are perfectly distinct realities; and to treat them, practically, as identical or equivalent, is to run into ruinous confusion.

name is called " THE WORD OF GOD," shall then gird his sword upon his thigh, and dip his vesture in the blood of the slain. Terrible ! terrible ! will be " The Supper of the Great God," in the valley of Armageddon !

On which side our own New England, meanwhile, will fall, cannot be doubtful. New England could not now be Romish. Her time is not yet. She has not yet entirely wasted the inheritance of her Pilgrim Fathers. She must be German, from blood, sympathy and historical connexions; and hold her way till the modernized German wisdom has more effectually eclipsed the wisdom of the Reformation, and its folly shall be demonstrated in its political and social imbecility. Her present institutions grew out of the imaginative philosophy of the last century, and must have their course accordingly. New England, as it is, struck, not like the Pilgrim Fathers, for God, but happiness ; not for liberty to worship Christ, but to drink tea, and speak in parliament. It sinned in its revolution ; or rather it sinned, and was revolutionized ; though the revolution was not sinful, but its *principle*. It struck for self, not for Christ ; and its success was held to give sanction to its selfish motive. God has dealt with us accordingly. He has left us to find such happiness as we could in the pursuit of our philosophical ideas. " He gave them their requests ; he sent leanness into their souls."

New England has consequently held to the skirts of all the successive philosophies of the old world ; and would outstrip them if it could. It drinks at their fountains. It affects their genius and spirit, their principles, their methods, and their magniloquence. There is no respectable variety of French or German metaphysics that has not its students and votaries, its cliques and coteries, in New England. There are but few adult, or even young persons among us, whom the pulpit, the commentary, the magazine, the newspaper, the school, the college, the seminary, the institute, the lyceum, the convention, the caucus, the anniversary, the club, the pic-nic, the social party, have not awakened to a new intellectual activity ; few whom they have not shaped to some new pattern of philosophy, or placed in unconscious sympathy with its ideas ; and few, consequently, who do not carry out their judgments, or their sympathies, in a corresponding habit of religious, political, or social life. New England is, therefore, rent and broken into factions, or patched up by compromises and coalitions, without number, which make its successive rents and fractures worse. Its many Christs lead as many schools. Every school has many Christs ; and every Christ has his own proper band. They sport their respective brooches

“He is not a Jew which is one outwardly ; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh ; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly ; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter ; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” The church

and badges, repeat their shibboleths, and shout their pæans, in fearful discord, it is true,, as any Christian man would reasonably presume, but to the same divinities of the unscriptural imagination, — “liberty, and the rights of man ;” as if these were the gods who led their fathers out of their house of bondage ; or as if true liberty were possible, and licentiousness would not ultimately react to despotism, without the Christ of the Reformation, the Christ whom they renounce.

These facts I take to be unquestionable, because they are not questioned, but admitted. All parties make them the theme of their discourse ; the few more thoughtful men, to mourn over them as evidences of apostasy and decline ; the many, to boast of them as proofs of an unexampled march of mind, and an opening era of universal light, liberty and happiness. If an old man speak of them in his sorrow, with forebodings, he is, by most persons, judged to be splenetic, and is thrust aside ; but the facts are not denied, If a young man repeat them, hopefully, though with exaggeration, he is commended as having drunk of the spirit of his age, and attained the first qualification of a leader of the people. He is thought to appreciate the facts. The same facts are a common basis of reasoning to opposite conclusions, accordingly as the respective parties interpret by faith or fancy. Wherefore, the facts are certain. No man can now reasonably pretend that New England is what it was. We are going forward, rapidly, on this speculative road ; and we cannot go back. Revolutions never go back. The streams return not to their sources.

Our present types of naturalistic speculation are the most refined. We seem, in this respect, to be near our limit, just as in regard to material progress ; for it is not supposable that any material agent should drive our persons faster than steam, or our thoughts than lightning. To these material forces the Eclecticism and Mysticism of the present day, the highest styles of the modern philosophy, have a natural correspondence. They are claimed to constitute, in their full developement, the perfection of humanity ; the one like to the compounding of all the powers that overcome the frictions of rude or organic matter ; the other darting invisibly through the air. Of these now popularized systems Eclecticism is the most formal and conspicuous ; the most learned, grave and dignified ; the severest student, the deepest thinker, the sharpest critic, the most cunning interpreter, the most authoritative judge, the most effective manager of affairs. It is, withal, the most presumptuous, arrogant and impious. Cousin, its Corypheus, with ineffable coolness, calls himself, federally and representatively, — for philosophy must

of God, which is the true church, is not true by virtue of any pattern of ordinances, even supposing that pattern to be divine; but only by virtue of its living principle. It has its federal heads, — the scientific organ and expositor of Scripture, and critic of the Holy Ghost. He seems to pride himself in that unpardonable sin. But mysticism is more imaginative, subtle, lively and energetic. It transcends idealism and speculation. Its more sublimated instinct needs them not. *It feels.* What want we more? But it equally dishonors Scripture, and contemns the Spirit. For its cardinal fiction is that of "the inner light," a light not of faith, not of reasoning, not of experience, but of intuition; not a mechanical judgment, or an ordinary flight of fancy, but a spiritual inspiration; a sufficient light, though susceptible of culture by the great man, from the introversion of his candle. It is, comparatively, harmless, like other fire, when restrained and tempered by a previous Christian discipline, or the overruling influence of a Christian neighborhood. A Madam Guyon, an Elizabeth Frye, a Clarkson, a Wesley, a Hopper, might be endured, for an hour, even by a Haldane; for an interpenetrating influence of the Gospel, or a chastened spirit of humanity, saves them from delirium. But when the inner light outshines the light of Christ, as it does, at length, if not in the fathers, yet in the children, then the innocent dreamer, the benevolent enthusiast, the bustling philanthropist, the confident reformer, becomes a conceited and headlong agitator, an incendiary, or a maniac. He is a leader of insane perfectionists, a revolutionizing debater, the fiery spouter of a popular assembly, or the oracle of a madhouse, where he finishes his architecture of a New Jerusalem in the moon.

It would be a great science, and of great value to religion, to comprehend these streams of philosophical naturalism flowing in their respective channels; or intermingling, now and then; or commingling with the educational Christianity of New England; and to describe, with desirable exactness, their respective, or their combined influence in giving character and tone to the public mind. It is an impossible science now, in the confusions of our present state of learning. It requires a revolution, — new principles, new methods, and a new nomenclature. We cannot have it now. Or, if we had, it could not be commended to a demented and committed people. They will travel their own road; they will even outrun their guides, and, as they plunge, will laugh, incontinently, at the alarmed outcry of their respective leaders. But it is not, perhaps, too high a science to be attempted, if one had a tolerable aptness for so difficult a task; and even a proximate accomplishment would be of great service to Christian students. It might arrest the centrifugal movement of the churches. There are, already, phenomena enough to constitute a basis. The materials are abundant, and at hand. Christian educators, at least, have a right to know them. They have observed, in the same minds, and in the same schools, the personal God of the Bible, and the conceptional God of the in-

ciple of faith, and the living Christ consequently indwelling. Yet is the true church, which, in respect to its living principle, is invisible, in another sense, also visible; for it rejects not ordinances, though it may inadvertently depart from the simple pattern of the Scripture;

telleet; the Christ of the Gospel, and the many Christs of the speculative or intuitional reason; the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of fiction, through a course of years, contending for the mastery. They have seen the better Spirit gradually offended and grieved away, till the individual, and, in due time, the public mind, has been left, mainly or absolutely, to its natural bad activity, and has run down, indefinitely, on the scale of worldliness and unbelief. They have seen Melancthon and Kant, Luther and Jacobi, Calvin and Cousin, Edwards and Hegel, in the same mental crucible, neutralizing each other, and precipitating a salt which had lost its saltiness, or eliminating a gas which now has sputtered and flashed, and then exploded; the one, a worthless product cast out to be trodden under foot of men, fit only to strew the courts and avenues of the temple; and the other, lighting up the temple, the city and the country round, in a general conflagration. The eclecticist, as the literal Bible has given way, in his mind, to fable, has become an intellectual innovator, a vehement polemic, a towering heresiarch, or an insidious demagogue; and the mysticist, as the inner light of nature has expelled the supernatural light of Scripture, has figured as a steaming visionary, a frantic declaimer, a reckless coalitionist, a mad conspirator, leagued with kindred spirits of every sect and party, burning out, at length, like the *ignis fatuus*, over his own slough. Or these together, as they have combined their forces to possess the Church and State, have set talent and learning, logic and rhetoric, in flame; have stirred up the confused and fretful people to deeds of lawlessness, violence and blood; and marched on, in a wild crusade, of modern fashion, but an old principle, to deliver without restoring, to recover without renewing, to reform without converting, to conquer without subduing, to animate without breath, to beautify without living tissues, and vainly seek possession of the Holy City while yet the people of the covenant, for whom alone it is reserved, are dispersed among the nations. Truly, it will be a great lesson which some will learn, by-and-by, when all this unbelieving naturalism shall have had its full developement, and reached its crisis, and received its judgment; and when God's holy prophecy, which a deluded world would not understand, nor even read, but to misinterpret, according to its vain ideas, shall become the history of its doom! Those students who comprehend the history wisely, beforehand, will be the benefactors of the world. For their sakes, mainly, I thus speak. Older men are likely to be committed, hopelessly, to their inveterate false ideas. The young are not yet too much prejudiced, to study: or too wise, to learn.

and it walks in ordinances, as appointed signs, and evidences, and helps of the antecedent and invisible principle within. The visible churches, of various patterns, do, for the most part, contain it. It is their conservative element, while they decline, as they are ever likely to decline into superstitious or fanatical idolatry. They are kept from formal judgment and extinction, so long as they do not absolutely drive out of them the men of faith who confound not the vital and the ritual of religion. But the men of faith, though introduced not, as yet, into any visible church ; or, though expelled ; or, of their own will, seceding ; or, though scattered and afflicted, so that they could not observe the ordinances in which they were brought up, are yet visible members of the true church, and distinguishable from the rest of mankind by the manifestation of this indwelling life of God in works of piety and charity, or the more precious fruits of patience and submission.

In this sense of manifesting Christ in ordinances, when they may, and, always, as they can, in the overt active and passive virtues of the Christian calling, believers are set forth, objectively and visibly, in Scripture, as the church of God. They are the body of Christ ; not an etherial, or a merely notional entity, but a people, elect, saved out of the merely objective and formal societies, ecclesiastical, civil or domestic, of the fallen world ; whom Christ vitalizes by the new life of love ; whom he defends by his power, comforts by his Spirit, and presents at length to the Father, as the fruit of his labor and travail, before all the worlds. They are Christ's body, because composed of members with their proper moral offices ; a body spiritual, but not less real ; a body mystical, but only in relation to our imperfect faculties ; a body taken into union with the glorious Christ, preserv-

ed by his mysterious indwelling, and destined, in its resurrection-state, to shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of the Father ; – the symbolic New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven. What it is now, in the manifested reality of its Divine life, and what it will be hereafter, in its state of manifested glory, the most significant figures of the Scripture do but imperfectly shadow forth to us, in the darkness of our probationary state. But we know that this holy society is Christ's, though now marred and disfigured by the clay, the flesh and blood of an earthly tabernacle ; and that he will still dwell in it, till he shall come to raise it in a state of glory, and “ This corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.”

This figure of body and soul, organization and life, constituting one complex person, our proper humanity, and representing all spiritual persons, the elect church, having Christ for their spiritual life, will assist us to conceive of the combined formal and vital substance of our justification. For the redeemed people of God are real beings, objective persons, constituting together a proper entity, a society, having properly described relations to God and each other. They are severally and collectively, by nature, according to Scripture, under the wrath and curse of God, alienated from him, and liable to everlasting death. They are dead in trespasses and sins, having no fitness for the heavenly state. But, according to the same Scripture, they are, individually and personally, subjects of God's everlasting mercy, given to Christ, in covenant, before the foundation of the world, and intended for the more perfect manifestation of the Divine perfections in the everlasting ages ; – ‘ That unto principalities and powers, in the heavenly places, might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God, ac-

cording to his eternal purpose in Christ Jesus our Lord.' In pursuance of this everlasting covenant, the incarnate Son of God offers himself, visibly and objectively, before all the worlds, a sacrifice for their sins. They are thereby redeemed, bought off, formally and visibly, from the sentence of the violated law. They are 'a purchased possession, that they might be to the praise of his glory.' They stand 'foreknown and predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ.' Their debt is paid. They are absolved from guilt, delivered from the power of death and hell, and, in respect to moral government and law, appear before the worlds in that state of formal, objective righteousness. The law cannot exact upon them, for 'Christ has borne their sins in his own body on the tree.' They are rescued from the curse. But can they live to righteousness? Can they be qualified for an everlasting life in a resurrection-state of glory? Can the whole humanity be purified from the defilement of sin, assimilated to God, raised incorruptible to inherit his kingdom, and thenceforward enter upon a career of glory, honor and immortality? That is a distinct problem, and the Son of God, who took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, for this very purpose, solves it in the Regeneration. For the mysterious God-man raises our fallen nature, by virtue of his redemption, to a union with the Divine. The living Christ possesses the recovered soul; restores and preserves, by the Holy Ghost, the Divine life of love; prevails over the resistances of a fallen nature and seducing spirits; and the blood-bought and sanctified company become, all and severally, a habitation of God, anointed, sealed, appropriated, defended, and kept by a divine power, through faith, unto salvation. They are appointed to remain here, definitely and indefinitely, in a probationary state,

for trial and discipline, for the enlightenment and conservation of the fallen world, as a depository of truth, and a propagator of the faith, till the ends of the present economy are fulfilled in the complete in-gathering of the elect, and the perfect vindication of moral government ; and then are brought with Christ, in the first resurrection, to be priests of God and of Christ, and to reign with him a thousand years. Then, and thenceforward, the whole revealed process of salvation is accomplished in the saints, — foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified. The form and the life of their salvation are combined and perfected in the Christ of their present faith. They are justified by his blood, justified in his righteousness. In this wonderful complexity of righteousness they live, and die, and live again, and live forever, and live together, in a social state ; — the City of God, having the glory of God. “ And there shall be no more curse : but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it ; and his servants shall serve him ; and they shall see his face ; and his name shall be in their foreheads : And there shall be no night there ; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun ; for the Lord God giveth them light : and they shall reign forever and ever.” “ Such honor have all the saints.”

But I am aware that all language, whether literal, figurative, or symbolic, can give us, here, no adequate conception of matters so far above us. God has made every thing in this world proportioned to every other thing. He has given us limited mental faculties, which are more straitened and confused by our contracted sinfulness ; and an imperfect language to correspond. We could know but little ; and, accordingly, we have instruments for learning but little. And the influence of

language and of our faculties is reciprocal. Our minds are kept down by the poverty of language ; and our language is made less significant by the poverty of our faculties ; so that we have a small compass at best. In respect to things natural we are obliged to go, more than we are willing to admit, by faith ; and, in things supernatural, without faith we cannot go at all. What God has taught us, particularly, concerning the subject of our justification by the blood and righteousness of Christ, we can measurably apprehend ; that is, we know the literal meaning of the terms in which the doctrine of the Scripture is declared ; and that this literal doctrine represents a cardinal fact of the Divine economy which involves our deliverance from sin, and its curse ; and our attainment of eternal life in a spiritual state of glory. We can illustrate this literal representation by reference to original principles of the Divine government, settled and handed down to us, from the beginning, in natural religion. We can assist our impressions, and strengthen our convictions, by reference to other synonymous terms, and to figures and analogies which convey the same literal fact by means of significant resemblances, or similar facts by corresponding representations. All these make the declared fact more evident. The experience of good men, of all periods, confirms it. Our own experience, the product of the promised Spirit of grace, gives us confidence, assurance, hope, peace, joy, victory over the world, triumph in death. ‘He that believeth hath the witness in himself.’ Being spiritual, through the indwelling Christ, he judgeth all things, yet is himself judged of no man. But that is all. Neither natural nor revealed religion, nor any influence of the Holy Spirit, helps us, in the least degree, to any philosophical account of the mysterious fact of our redemption ; and to stretch

ourselves in this respect, though in the least degree, beyond the limits which God has assigned to knowledge, during our probationary state, is presumption and impiety. It inflates us with vain and foolish conceits, and reacts to unbelief, licentiousness, and a worse destruction. That higher attainment belongs only to a higher sphere, a more perfect dispensation, in which the meek, the believing, the obedient, the patient waiters for the coming of their Lord, will awake, in his likeness, to larger faculties, a purer region of thought, and a heavenly language. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure. And he that keepeth his commandment dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." That is our word and rule; and he who keeps it will be saved.

I shall close with one remark; namely, that if justification, a state of righteousness before God, is alone by Christ, formally and vitally, and in these senses combined; then Christianity, formally and vitally, dogmatically and experimentally, its positive institutions and their energizing principle, its body and soul, alone can save this fallen world. Without the dying and living Christ, believed on with the heart, confessed with the mouth, and kept in remembrance by the ordinances of the Church, as God gives opportunity, we die not to sin, and live not to righteousness; and all the semblances and affectations of virtue are nugatory and destructive. In righteousness only can we stand, and our only righteousness is in the right of Christ. All else is fiction and pretence, the righteousness of our mere humanity which is corrupted,

imbecile, condemned. Without Christ our manners, our reason, and our speech; our learning and our laws; our agriculture, trade and commerce; our families, schools, colleges, churches, and the comprehending State, must fall. For no house can stand without a foundation; and “No other foundation can any man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.” Without Christ we may build, and demolish, and remodel, and reconstruct, and readorn; but our labor will be lost. The very greatness of our unchristian or antichristian civilizations, will be the measure of their doom and shame. Where are the states and nations of the old pagan world? Where is Jerusalem? Where will soon be the antichristian states and nations of modern Europe, when the pent-up volcanoes of human passion shall break forth, and the madness of despotism and the madness of revolutionism shall dash against each other? Without Christ we may seem to live; but the principle of decay will soon bring us to the dust; and our resurrection will not be to a better life, but a greater condemnation. Without Christ, our stately Babylons, our gorgeous palaces, our sumptuous feasts, our gods of silver and gold, will not defer our reckoning, nor avert our judgment; but in the exuberance of our plenty, the splendor of our magnificence, the exhilaration of our pleasures, and the extravagance of our boasting, the handwriting will appear upon the wall. Without Christ, our manifold expedients to improve, to correct, to reform, to advance, to regulate society, by our natural wisdom, our laws, our institutions of learning and religion, or even by the checks and balances, the antagonisms and strifes of party, may not be useless; for they limit the selfishness of man, and restrain his wrath; they afford occasional shelter, protection and security to the people of God, till the day of

their redemption cometh ; but they cannot save. They are the husk, the shell, the burr, defending the precious fruit till the harvest of the age, graceful, rough, prickly, as the case may be, but having no further office ; for life, resurrection, salvation, are only in the kernel.

Wherefore, for Christ's sake, we preach and testify these things, and warn every man, and exhort, and so much the more as we see the day approaching ; “ For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

